

THE
MASTER PASSION;

OR,

The History

OF

FREDERICK BEAUMONT.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

It is the show and seal of Nature's truth,
When Love's strong passion is imprest in youth.

LONDON:



TO MY READER.

MR. MILLER tells me that a History from a nameless Author "will never do."

I fear he may be right;—yet have I not sufficient confidence to talk to the world without a mask.

The "MASTER PASSION," then, must stand by its own strength, or fall by its own weakness. I might, however, venture to give it one negative recommendation. I might fairly, boast that, should it unhappily fail to satisfy good taste, it will, *at least*, be acquitted of all *offence* against good morals.—But let me boast of nothing, save only, of an ardent ambition to please *you*.

And, if THE SECRET TRIBUNAL, whose
judicial sentence sways the taste of Readers,
and pales the cheeks of Writers,
should—— But here a sudden dizziness
comes over me.—

Reader, farewell !

Your faithful humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE
MASTER PASSION,
&c.

CHAP. I.

MARIA Maynard was the favourite of man, woman, and child ; and had one signal token of being a favourite of Heaven ; for “ whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”

In early infancy she was deprived of her mother. A few years afterwards, the only sister of her father, devotedly attached to his child, took her, with his concurrence, to London, from her paternal residence in Wales, for the purpose of adding to the graces of nature, the elegances and accomplishments of polished life. During this absence from her home, which was of long continuance, her father died :—in a few years afterwards, and at the very crisis when her heart, mind, person, and manners, had

friend, this tender relation was likewise taken from her; but not before she had bequeathed to her a legacy, in addition to the moderate inheritance which she had derived from her father. This bequest conferred not affluence, it is true, but it was all that the testatrix held in her own disposal.

And now, the wishes of the lovely and dejected orphan pointed to her native home, which she still remembered with yearning affection; and, although it was robbed of her father's presence, there still remained upon the spot a dear and intimate companion of her childhood, a Miss Amyand, who, with her mother, resided in the neighbourhood. Miss Maynard was urgently solicited to be their inmate, and with them, she, now in her twentieth year, gladly consented to take up her abode.

At no great distance from the house of Mrs. Amyand, and on a small estate in a most romantic situation, lived Mr. Villiers,

all that knew him. The families were already in the habit of visiting each other, and the lapse of a few months increased their acquaintance to intimacy. An attachment grew, and daily strengthened, between Edmund Villiers, and Maria Maynard. The elder Mr. Villiers, with much of paternal tenderness, had something of the paternal pride which that tenderness too frequently inspires; the first effect of which had been an indulgence of the early, and ardent passion of his boy for military pursuits,—pursuits which originated rather in the enthusiastic interest he took in the history of ancient wars, than in his personal knowledge of the heroes of modern times. By the self-same pride, however, was the father now impelled to oppose the still more fervent passion of his son for his lovely neighbour, on whom, though all the gifts of nature were exhausted, those of fortune were, as we have seen, but sparingly bestowed. For two whole years, this opposition was continued; but the dutious struggles of a darling, and disappointed son, and

the distinguished merits, and engaging manners, of Maria Maynard, at length overcame the resistance of the father. His full consent obtained, they were married ; and, for twelve short months, were happy. Scarcely were those months expired, when the noble Edmund, who, by close attention to his profession, had risen to the colonelcy of his regiment, at the age of eight-and-twenty, was ordered to the East Indies.

His tender wife, who had recently become a mother also, sickened with sad forebodings at the news. The infant daughter which she cradled in her arms, had made her doubly a coward : she felt too surely that she was not a heroine, yet remembered that she was still a Christian ; and that though, as a mother, she might tremble, yet, as a mother, she must resolve to act. He saw, and shared her struggles ; and thus, with bursting hearts, and anguish ill suppressed, they parted.

Deep, and silent was the grief of the father at the separation ; and long was the interval, before either the tenderness of his

daughter-in-law, who, from this time,^s quitted him no more, or the daily opening smiles of intelligence in the countenance of her child, could bring him comfort. At length, in the second year of his son's absence, and just as he was again beginning to taste of hope, a newspaper, in which was recorded a battle against a powerful Nabob, in the interior parts of India, concluded its melancholy tale with a list of the officers who had fallen. In that list he had barely power to read the name of Edmund Villiers.

This stroke, which his parental anxiety had too often anticipated as probable, was not, on that account, the less severe. For a time, it left him stunned—but the sight of his poor Maria, who now came smiling into the room, unconscious of the coming blow, while it thrilled to his heart, irresistibly called on him to forget, if possible, himself in her. Instantly did she perceive that something had shaken him to the centre. A moment afterwards, he desired her to sit beside him; and, sum-

moning at once the remaining energies of his mind, he tenderly prepared her for the wound he was enforced to give. She rivetted her aching eyes on his, as he proceeded through his mournful task ; and when the dreaded truth was all unfolded, convulsively clasped her hands, and dropped lifeless at his feet ! A few days afterwards, the heavy tidings were too well confirmed by a letter from one of the surviving officers, which told of Edmund's noble deeds, and honourable death; honourable in itself, and so felt, so welcomed, by him on whom it fell; for, to this account it was subjoined, that, while he lay, still bleeding, on the field, he was overheard faintly repeating to himself,—

“ Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.”

The same fatal epistle enclosed to the wretched widow, from his own dying hand, his last farewell !

“ Long were to tell” what was endured of bitter grief, by the unhappy father, and heart-wounded wife. The sufferings of

the former were shortened by a more advanced age ; and infirmities, increased by sorrow, soon released him from the load of life. This second stroke, while again it smote the heart of Maria, seemed, yet, to bring with it one alleviation,—that of freeing her from the cruel duty of exerting her own broken spirits in unavailing efforts to support those of her father and friend : she, accordingly, resigned herself, with a mournful satisfaction, to the full indulgence of her grief. Her father-in-law had left her his estate, together with the house which they had inhabited. There, for three long years, did she continue to shut herself from all who would have approached to comfort her. General condolences she dreaded to receive ; and Miss Amyand, already mentioned as her most intimate friend, and whose marriage had taken place within a short period of her own, had, with her mother and husband, left the kingdom.

At length, the improving stature of the little Helena, and the idea that her infant

mind would soon require an instructor, and a guide, roused her from the lethargy of grief, and she awoke to thought, to action, and, at last, to hope. She resolved to look towards the future for her child, and, in her child, for herself. She admitted the few associates afforded by her retirement, as feeling that they would be conducive to the amusement of her Helena, and were almost essential to the expansion of her mind, as well as the ease of her manners.

She now devoted herself, with exemplary constancy, to the welfare of this beloved child, and contemplated, with a mother's interest, the effects of her growing graces on her admiring friends ;—though often-times the kindling smile was quenched in tears, as the image of Edmund rushed upon her mind, and she mused on the delight with which the father would have watched those graces, and advanced them to maturity. Great, however, was the rapidity of this advancement ; and the mind thus anxiously treasured, was enclosed in a casket altogether worthy of the jewel

within. Certainly, the beauty of Helena was of a kind, and degree, that could not but be highly flattering to the fond ambition of a mother.

To draw the picture of the pretty Helena would task alike the pen, or pencil. Nature, though she gave her to be “baptized in tears,” endowed her with a vivacity and versatility of character, which were eloquent in her countenance; and when that countenance was lighted up with smiles, it shone like a sun-beam on her mother’s heart. But the peculiar spirit which informed her beauty we will leave to manifest itself as we proceed:—the *surface* of it was not far from this:—her eye was the very azure of the heavens:—it was a long eye;—large it was not—nor certainly was it small:—neither its size, nor form, however, could have been other than they were, without injury to the face which it illumined. It was naturally a lively eye; but when the long, dark, silken lashes that overshadowed it, were bathed with the

drops of pity, or of penitence for the little sins of childhood, so tender was its look, that Carlo Dolce might have transplanted it to the face of a weeping Magdalene. Her complexion was distinguished for the rosy brilliancy of its tints, and soft was the satin on which those tints were laid ; while the general effect of her countenance was heightened by the auburn curls which clustered round it. Her nose was of that subtly rising contour, which exhibited a turn peculiarly adapted to a face of animation, and absolutely appropriated to *her face*. Her mouth was yet more difficult to delineate than all the rest—attended as it was by a playful dimple or two, which appeared, and disappeared, with every varying feeling. Add to all a sylph-like figure, and the prettiest hands and feet in the world, and you have Helena before you, as nearly as I can present her, such as she was, her mother's idol, at ten years old ;—for so much time has stolen away, while she has been learning to read, and work, and write ; besides having made a very consi-

derable progress in the rudiments of French, drawing, and music; in all of which it was the business and delight of her accomplished mother, to be her sole instructress. From this time, she proposed to herself great, and important assistance in the culture of her daughter's understanding, by the kindness of a neighbour, who held the highest place in her preference and good opinion — the rector of the village she inhabited — Mr. Melcombe. This gentleman was a younger son of a noble family: his education had been worthy of his birth; and he had reaped from both, those bright advantages which equally qualified him for retirement, and for the world; while, happily, from his high connexions he had obtained a Living, together with a large addition to his fortune, while he had youth and health to give them value. He had now been in possession of his benefice for several years; discharging his sacred functions in a manner that commanded equally the love, and the veneration of all — “high and low, rich and poor.”

" By him, the violated law spoke out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whisper'd peace."

He was religious, without a taint of bigotry; and, what was still more rarely meritorious, without a spark of animosity against the bigotted. With such, he would sometimes reason; and if they were gloomy and despairing, he would pity, but he never scorned them. Charitable he was, in every import of the word. He was profoundly learned too; yet thought it necessary, as well as felt it natural, to be perfectly well-bred. With all these perfections, at the age of six-and-thirty, he was still unwedded; but whether by choice, or fate, was not surmised.

At the period of which we are now speaking, this exalted Character had under his friendly charge a certain Youth, whose father, while he was himself amassing a fortune for him in India, had left him, in his childhood, to the protection of Mr. Melcombe, the chosen companion of his early days. Frederick Beaumont was, at

this period, thirteen years of age, and stood very high, in character and situation, at Eton school. No time was lost in his vacations; for they were passed in reading, walking, riding, and conversing, with his beloved instructor and friend. His gayer hours were spent, for the most part, in frolicking with Helena, in her mother's garden. Sometimes, too, he would assist her improvements in drawing, in which he had, himself, made very considerable advances; but his greatest delight was in riding by her side with Mr. Melcombe, who was just beginning to teach her to hold her bridle, and sit a pretty little snow-white poney, which, at this time, was her newest and favourite plaything. Mr. Melcombe was extravagantly fond of her, and when she paced, and prattled along, between himself and Frederick, it was difficult to say which looked the happiest of the three. Now and then, when she was more inclined to laugh with Frederick, than attend to her horse, the grave preceptor would pretend to scold, and tell her to mind her bridle,

or he would not take her out another time.

"O yes you will, Sir ;" said she, one day, "and, besides, I know you and Frederick will take care of me :—as for him, if Poney does but trip the least in the world, he is always ten times more frightened than I am."

"But what could I, or even *Frederick* do, should Frolick run away with you ? He is but a foolish Frolick, and if we were to pursue him, would only scamper away the faster ; and if you should fall off, and break your little neck, what would become of poor mamma ?"

"O my pretty mamma!—well, now I will be very good indeed, if you will but put the bridle right once more."

Frederick was "sure *he* could do that ;" —but before he had time to take hold of it, Frolick, with a sudden nod, had twitched it out of her hand. It fell, and entangled his foot, which both incommoded and alarmed him, and he began to wheel about, still treading on the bridle, and appearing

to be every moment ready to fall, with his trembling little rider, to the ground; but Frederick, who in an instant had dismounted, seized his foot, and while Mr. Melcombe took charge of Helena, disentangled the bridle, and set poney on his legs again;—but, colouring with terror at what might have happened, cried out—

“ Helena, Helena, why did you let it go?”—She mounted again with great composure, saying,

“ So! now *you* are going to scold!” At last, all was adjusted, and they rode peacefully on to Mrs. Villiers’s house, where she was anxiously watching for them at the parlour window. Mr. Melcombe took Helena from her steed with the greatest care, gave her an affectionate kiss, and away she ran to her mamma.

CHAP. II.

ON the following morning, Mrs. Villiers, having spent some hours in the instruction of Helena, dismissed her to her amusements in the garden : and Helena, perceiving an old man who was frequently employed to work in it, and with whom she had formed the *strictest friendship*, was presently at his side. She would often stand near him, watching him at his occupation, and asking him a hundred pretty questions, which he was ever ready to answer, and sometimes would she busily employ herself, under his directions, and delight in fancying that she was of prodigious use to him in his labours. She had been thus engaged for about an hour, while Mrs. Villiers had been sitting at her work. Helena entered—

"Pray, mamma, what sort of a place is London?"

"A large question, Helena: perhaps you may see one day or other; but what put London in your head just now?"

"Why, mamma, old Bernard says it's the D—l's Country—naughty word you know!—he says he saw him there, and told me a great deal about it; it's a very pretty story, mamma; do, let him tell it you himself."

"Old Bernard talks nonsense:—but my dear child, how you have heated yourself! what have you been about?"

"Hard at work, mamma, helping old Bernard."

"Well, now, go and take off your bonnet, and then come and help me:—for I am tired of this hearth-rug, and want it finished."

'Away she flew, but *flew* not back. Mrs. Villiers began to wonder what was become of her. At last she appeared.

"What have you been doing all this time, Helena?"

"Curling my hair nice, mamma. Old Bernard said it was very pretty ; so, I was looking at it in the glass, and I quite forgot you were waiting for me."

"What should old Bernard know about hair, child ? do sit down, and shade that flower as I have done this."

"Yes, mamma."

At that moment entered Frederick, with his arm full of new books.

"O mamma, look at Frederick!"—He approached; and, with whimsical gravity, dropped on one knee to Helena, and, tottering, presented the books,

"With Mr. Melcombe's duty to Miss Villiers."

"How kind is Mr. Melcombe!" said Mrs. Villiers.

"Mr. Melcombe's *duty to me*, mamma!"—and she laughed, and chuckled, for a minute ; and then, with assumed dignity, befitting the occasion, prepared to receive them graciously : when Frederick, having lost his gravity,—and his balance, tumbled them all on the floor. Not being in a se-

date mood, he made another overset 'in picking them up—saying,

"I am as awkward as Lord Chesterfield's awkward man."

"Does Mr. Melcombe let you read Lord Chesterfield?" asked Mrs. Villiers—

"Only a selection, Ma'am: he says I must not read the letters through—there they are, and I never see them but my fingers ache to pull them down."

"But you never do, I am sure, Frederick."—

"No, Ma'am," said Frederick, emphatically, and a little proudly: "but was it not rather odd, Ma'am, for Lord Chesterfield to write to his son, what I must 'not read?'"

"I think it was, Frederick, and so thought a greater man than either of us," said Mrs. Villiers laughing—and opening a volume of Cowper's poems, which lay on the table, she pointed out to him those beautiful lines which begin thus:—

"Petronius! all the muses weep for thee,
But ev'ry tear shall scald thy memory.

The Graces, too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and curs'd the priest." &c. &c.

" Do not forget them, Frederick, they will serve you as an antidote to Lord Chesterfield's poison." .

Helena was lost in all the books. They were " Goldsmith's Natural History," and " L'Ami des Enfans." A volume of the latter was in her hand—

" O mamma, may Frederick read one of these stories to us ?"

Mrs. Villiers—laughing—" You should ask Frederick's leave before mine, I think, Helena."—" O, he will, I know ;—won't you, Frederick ?"

He read. The story was interesting. Mrs. Villiers cast a side-glance at the flower :—it was spoiled. Helena was reproved for carelessness ;—she received the reproof with looks of humility, and promises of immediate reparation ; and Mrs. Villiers told her, that, as she was so peni-

tent, she might lay aside her work, for the present, and attend to Frederick.

“ What’s being penitent, mamma ?”

“ I will tell you another time ; but Frederick’s hours are precious ; if he is to read, let him go on.”

He did so—and when he had ended the tale and was taking his departure, Helena loaded him with a thousand thanks, and loves, to Mr. Melcombe, for his “ beautiful present.”

“ But before you go, Frederick, mind, you have not put the moss upon my geraniums :—go, and do it now.”

“ Helena !”—said Mrs. Villiers, “ is Frederick your slave ?”

“ I shall do it, she knows :”—and away he went, to do as he was bidden. A little lecture ensued from mamma, on “ speaking prettily ;” with an explanation of penitence, and some general observations on humility of deportment.

To her mother, Helena was a model of obedience—to others, most particularly to the domestics, if they ever ventured to

find fault with her, she would sometimes stand *higher* than mamma thought becoming ; but this pride brought on its own humiliation ; for Mrs. Villiers never failed to oblige her to make concessions to all whom she had hurt or offended.

CHAP. III.

MR. Melcombe was an early riser, and very solicitous that Frederick should follow his example.

Frederick did his best, but high spirits, and much exercise, occasioned him to sleep very soundly ; and a few mornings after the incidents related in the last chapter, he was in profound repose at eight o'clock, when Mr. Melcombe entered his apartment,—and called out, “ Frederick ! what, sleeping still ? old Homer and I have been waiting for you this hour, you rogue, and we have wounded Venus, and laid waste the plain, without your assistance ; for I

opened the book where I should have read with you, and was so entranced with it, that I could not lay it down; but come, make haste, and I will fight all the battle o'er again with you before breakfast, yet."

"Yes, Sir," yawned Frederick,—and he rubbed his eyes, and begged pardon. Mr. Melcombe left him, and he was soon in the study at his side. Frederick, though a very young Grecian, began already to taste the sublimity of the language, and when he had made himself master of a favourite passage, delighted to repeat it, and dwell on the musical and majestic effect of the words, and the varied cadences of the verse. He would perserve the full force of the sentiment, or description, by an energy of utterance, and richness of intonation, which were truly gratifying to Mr. Melcombe, who was himself a fine reader, as well as an enthusiast in poetry, and had taken great pains in giving his pupil the proper emphasis. Other requisites of good reading, he knew, could be conferred by

nature alone, and he was well pleased to observe that the combination was complete.

"I think, Sir, there is a great deal of dignity in the sullenness of Achilles. He is a proud, passionate fellow ; but, somehow, I cannot help liking him, for all that."

"He has a great many faults ; but I am rather of opinion that Homer could not help liking him neither, Frederick ;—for he has thrown about him a lustre that is irresistible : then, he has made him courteous, affectionate, and, in one instance, compassionate.

"When Priam kneel'd, the great Achilles wept."

"But as you have read the Iliad in the second edition of Cowper's translation, which gives perhaps the closest idea of the original that our language is capable of giving, you are not now to learn that Achilles was selfish in his anger, and ungenerous in his revenge. That he was ill-used by Agamemnon, is indisputable ; but, it would have well become *Achilles*, to have sacrificed his own wrongs to the cause in which he was engaged ; more par-

ticularly, as he did not profess to be very deeply attached to Briseïs : but, though he saw that the long ten years' war was drawing to a crisis at which he alone could decide it in favour of Greece, he suffered his princely companions in battle to implore, and his friends to kneel, in vain ; till the death of Patroclus called him to revenge. —Then—but though I do not love him, Frederick, I respect him too much to dwell on his words, and his actions, when the noble Hector fell."

" O no, don't talk of all that, Sir ;—but, —What a brave fellow he was !—Was not he as brave as Alexander the Great, Sir ?"

" Doubtless, he was ; but *Hector* is *my* hero ; though I see that he will not be yours these dozen years ; and, possibly, not their. Now let us go to breakfast ; and then to Virgil ; and then—for a ramble on the mountains."

" Shall we call on Mrs. Villiers as we come home, Sir ?"

Mr. Melcombe did not answer for four or five seconds.

"No; not to-day, Frederick; we have been there very often of late, and you have lost a little too much time in gardening with Helena."

"Dear thing! she is so happy when I work for her in her own garden, and teach her to nurse plants and flowers!"

"She is a sweet little creature—though she will not have *quite* the feminine softness, and graceful dignity, of her mother."

"O I *do* love *her*, too!—don't you Sir?"

"My dear boy, we will go to-morrow."

"Thank you Sir."

Mr. Melcombe had no more inclination to abate the frequency of their visits, than Frederick; but had more reasons for proposing this delay than he chose to assign.

"To-morrow" came. Frederick rose earlier: the morning engagements were all fulfilled in good time, and the tutor and pupil went together to Mrs. Villiers's. It

was a beautiful, soft, summer day ; and, after the first greetings, they all adjourned to the garden. The young ones scampered away to look after their flowers, and Mr. Melcombe and Mrs. Villiers walked quietly after them.

“ That’s a charming boy, Mr. Melcombe !”

“ Indeed he is, Madam—every thing I can wish ; for he has no more of human frailty than just shews that he is—not an angel ; and has a warmth of heart, and vigour of understanding, that give me every thing to hope for.”

“ How happy is Mr. Beaumont, at the distance to which he is banished from his Son, in having confided him to such a Friend, and such an Instructor ! I sometimes think—that—when he is gone to school, and you are more at leisure, I shall be half tempted to solicit your assistance in tutoring my giddy one, who is, now and then, a little too volatile for my spirits.”

“ You both honour, and flatter me, Madam ; and, although there is nothing she

ought to know which you are not fully qualified to teach, yet, to save you any exertion which might be too pressing on your spirits, and still more to share with you the interesting task of enlightening such a mind, will be a happiness that I did not—dared not—I mean, that would afford me the sincerest pleasure, and gratification."

Mrs. Villiers thanked him ; but there was a something in his manner that surprised her, and made her a little repent that she had made this proposition ;—and, she said no more.

Mr. Melcombe, however, pursued the subject, and, from whatever motive he had proposed to himself to slacken his visits, the present occasion appeared to him to dictate the necessity of increasing their frequency. He informed Mrs. Villiers that Frederick had made some progress in geography; but that it would be an indulgence both to Frederick, and himself, to be permitted, for Helena's benefit, to run through their lessons once more; and he begged to be allowed to set apart, for this purpose,

two mornings in every week, on which they should come to her house at any convenient hour. He concluded, by entreating that they might begin on the following day. Mrs. Villiers was silent.

"*Why*, my dear Madam, do you now hesitate?"

She felt it must appear strange that she did so—and felt, too, that she had in fact no assignable reason for retracting her wish:—again she thanked him; and it was settled, that, on the next morning, they should begin their lectures.

Helena had an insatiable thirst for every species of information; and when she heard the arrangement, was in ecstacies—"Learn geography, Mamma! and of Mr. Melcombe! and with Frederick!"

The next day, the lessons commenced in Mrs. Villiers's dressing-room—an elegant little apartment, overlooking the garden, to which descended a small flight of steps. Beyond that, lay a meadow, where the white poney ranged by the side of a river, flow-

ing through a country that might flatter the imagination of an enthusiast with ~~the~~ ideas of the Vale of Tempé, or the Groves of Paradise.

When the lesson was over, the whole party repaired again to the garden. Helena had been attentive, and had leave to gambol without restraint. She was soon in full flight round the walks ; and Frederick, like a young Apollo, close behind her. In a few minutes afterward, he was pulling up hill, at a large rolling-stone, with his utmost strength. On the lower ground, in the same walk, with her head averted from her play-fellow, stood Helena, in deep meditation on a beautiful caterpillar which she had just picked up. Frederick, while endeavouring to secure his hold of the handle, let it suddenly slip from his grasp, and the roller ran rapidly down the walk.

Mrs. Villiers, seeing Helena's situation, uttered a shriek of terror. Mr. Melcombe was by her side :—she staggered—he, in a moment, extended his arms ; and caught

her, fainting, as she fell. Frederick was calling out to Helena, with all the strength of his voice,

" Away—away from the roller"—and waving his hand to hasten her.

She had turned at the rumbling of the stone, and the shriek of her mother; and had skipped off on a flower-bed, while the roller passed violently by. Frederick ran up to her, and, gently slapping her cheek, cried out—

" Why, Helena, how dare you frighten me so?"

" How dare you make me jump upon those two beautiful carnations? There! I have broke both their necks."

" Never mind the carnations, my dear little girl; I thought I had killed *you!*"—and he gasped, and panted, and, trying to laugh, fairly sobbed upon her shoulder. They now turned up the walk.

" Hol—lo"—cried Frederick, still trembling, " What's the matter with Mrs. Villiers?"

" Where? what?—Mamma!—where?"

Mr. Melcombe was supporting her to the house—Frederick flew to assist, and Helena flew after him, crying,

“ Mamma, dear mamma ! I am quite well :—the roller did not hurt me—pray, pray, look up at me !”

They placed her on a sofa, and by proper assistance she was soon recovered. The sight of Helena’s sorrowful face gave a turn to her feelings, and she was relieved by a shower of tears. She then smiled, and nodded at her darling, who wept, kissed her, and begged forgiveness, all in a breath. When the children were again dismissed, Mr. Melcombe sat down by Mrs. Villiers, and taking her hand with the tenderest respect in both his own, asked, in a tone of trembling anxiety,

“ How are you now ?”

“ Better—much better, I thank you—this child makes quite a simpleton of me. How much trouble I have given you !”

“ Trouble !—my *dear* Friend; I would give half my existence to save you one moment’s pain.”—He paused ; then, fixing

his eyes on hers, he ended—"to contribute to your happiness, would be well worth my whole life's solicitude."

Mrs. Villiers shook her head—

"I thank your zeal—your kindness, Sir, a thousand times;—but happiness and I have quarrelled for many a year; and, in *this* world, we shall meet no more."

Mr. Melcombe shuddered.—The "*Sir*," at such a moment, and the tone of it, struck cold to his heart; and the melancholy winding up of the sentence told him all he had to dread. He sat, with his head thrown backward on the sofa, in perfect silence, for some minutes. Mrs. Villiers had not courage to add another word; but each well knew what was passing in the mind of the other.

The voices, and feet, of the young ones, were now heard on the steps from the garden; and Mr. Melcombe, dreading the sight of the children, yet not daring to prevent their approach, started up, and, pressing the hand of Mrs. Villiers, could only say, "God bless you!"—in a voice of deep ex-

pression, and rushed out at the opposite door.

"Where's Mr. Melcombe?" cried the children, both in a breath.

"I believe he is gone home."

"What, without me!" said Frederick, "and has left no message?"

"No,—perhaps he will come in again—I don't know."

He came no more; and, when the dinner hour drew near, Frederick returned home, and found that Mr. Melcombe had walked out, and left word that he was not to be expected at dinner.

Frederick was disappointed,—took a short repast, and calling Tiger, Mr. Melcombe's favourite Newfoundland dog, who, he was surprised to find, had not followed his master, as usual, set out on a long range over the mountains, in search of wild shrubs, goats, and cataracts.

CHAP. IV.

FREDERICK did not return 'till dusk. He met Mr. Melcombe looking out for him.

"O Sir, I am glad to see you :—I lost you at Mrs. Villiers's, and concluded I should find you at home, but,—but—" and Frederick, who, though gay and thoughtless, was full of delicacy, felt that he was taking a liberty by seeming to inquire where Mr. Melcombe had been.

"Very particular circumstances occasioned me to go out for the remainder of the day."

"You look tired, Sir :—let me prevail on you to take a little supper, and a glass of wine, to-night."

Mr. Melcombe let Frederick do what he pleased with him ; and as, in truth, he had dined *nowhere*, the proposal was not altogether unpleasant to him. He had left home, to avoid the constraint of Frederick's

company, and wandered about all day, in the vain hope of escaping from himself. Frederick was all activity, and solicitude, in ordering and contriving a refreshing repast for his respected Friend, and anxiously exerted all his powers to cheer and amuse him. At no other moment would such attentions have been lost on Mr. Melcombe—but, lost they were. He tried, indeed, to smile at Frederick's gaiety, and to meet his advances towards conversation; but the effort was vain, and soon after the cloth was removed,

“ My dear boy,” said he, “ you are very attentive to me, and very kind ; but, I am not very well, nor very gay ; and I think I shall be better for a good night’s rest.”

“ I hope you will have it, Sir, with all my heart”—said Frederick.

Mr. Melcombe, once more alone, hoped for nothing *less* than a good night’s rest. Few as had been the words of Mrs. Villiers, he felt them to be conclusive; and the more so, as they accorded but too well with some general observations which he

had heard from her on second marriages ; and also with other distant, but expressive, allusions to her own feelings ; all of which had kept him silent on this most interesting subject, though for a long, long period it had engaged his thoughts. He also felt that Mrs. Villiers was not a woman to resolve rashly, or relent weakly ; and, unfortunately, the more he honoured her constancy, the more he loved her ;—and he *had* loved her, though she guessed it not, for years before they had been accidentally associated in their present retirement. During her residence in the metropolis, he had frequently met her—admired, loved, and sighed for her : but, having at that time no benefice, and but a slender fortune, he would not seek to wed her to his poverty ; but, generously suppressed his wishes, and was, soon after, overwhelmed with the tidings of her marriage.

As circumstances now stood, he feared to renew the hints which, at a moment of deep interest in her feelings for her child, he had lately given, lest she should take

the alarm, and abate of that confiding frankness which was the choicest comfort of his life. It was possible that she might suddenly terminate their present friendly intercourse, or, at least, forbid the frequency of his visits. The next moment, he endeavoured to revive his former resolutions of abating this frequency, by a strenuous effort of prudence: but—it was too late—Why should he deny himself the only gratification for which he had now to hope?—he could not, he would not, do it:—the geographical lessons *must* be continued:—yet he determined to absent himself for a few days. In the mean time, he *would* re-collect, re-compose himself, and resume his self-command: he *would* convince her that she had no more to apprehend from his confessions, and nothing to dread from his solicitations.

With these resolves, interrupted but by short and uneasy slumbers, he arose in the morning; and calling up all his fortitude, endeavoured to induce Frederick to believe that he was well, and happy.—He applied

closely to his engagements with his pupil, and devoted his leisure hours, with peculiar vigilance, to the cares of his profession, and the necessities, mental and bodily, of his parishioners.

Three days had now elapsed,—and the morning on which *Helena* would expect him, at length arrived. He proposed to the delighted Frederick that they should adjourn to Mrs. Villiers's.

“ And, do, Frederick, desire Thomas to follow us in a few minutes with the globe.”

They arrived at the gate. Mr. Melcombe rang, with a beating heart. They entered—and, perceiving Mrs. Villiers, and Helena, at the further end of the garden,

“ We will go—and—meet them,”—said Mr. Melcombe, falteringly. Mrs. Villiers felt embarrassed, as they approached. Frederick settled all this in a moment, by flying up to Mrs. Villiers, and exclaiming, as he threw his arms round her,

“ My dear, sweet, Mrs. Villiers, how do you do? I have not seen you these three

whole days!—how pretty you do look this morning!"

" My dear Frederick! how very foolish you are!"

" But you do, indeed!—now doesn't she, Mr. Melcombe?"

" Be quiet, Frederick;"—and Mrs. Villiers actually frowned.

" Not prettier than *usual*," said Mr. Melcombe—and he bent down to caress Helena, who had walked up, and put her little hand into his.

Frederick took her other hand.

" I did not know whether you intended to speak to *me*, Mr. Frederick!"

" Not speak to *you*!—yes, that I will, all day long."

They now all entered the dressing-room. The globe was brought in, and placed on the table. Helena passed her examination in her former lesson with great honour, and they proceeded to a new one. Mr. Melcombe turned the globe so as to place England at the top. He began to explain

to Helena who, and what, were its anti-podes. "Those who live here," said he, pointing underneath.

"Won't they fall down, Mamma?"

"Attend to Mr. Melcombe," said Mrs. Villiers. Mr. Melcombe then put Helena's finger upon England, and was trying to hold the globe steady.

"Are you quite well, Mr. Melcombe?" asked Helena.

"Yes, my dear—why should you ask me just now?"

"Because your hand shakes so sadly—only look, Mamma!—the globe won't stand still."

Mr. Melcombe began to wish that both the children were dumb.

"My dear love," said he, in a very impatient voice, "I beseech you to listen to me."

"Be silent, and attentive, Helena," said Mrs. Villiers. She was so; and, dropping a penitent courtesy, obtained forgiveness; and the lecture concluded without further difficulties.

CHAP. V.

Mrs. Villiers, one morning, gave Helena a commission which she very readily undertook :—it was to go, under the care of Betty, and visit a poor woman in the village, who had been very ill, and for whom Mrs. Villiers had been prescribing, but whom she had not seen for some days. Helena was directed to make particular inquiries whether she had received benefit from the medicines she had sent ; and to carry such nourishing food as was proper in her exhausted state.

Just before they arrived at the cottage, they were met by Frederick, who, on hearing their errand, offered to join the party. They all entered the cottage. Helena performed her commission, and received from the invalid an improved account of her health, and a thousand blessings for herself, and her Mamma. Frederick gave the poor

woman a token of his bounty, to assist her recovery ; and Helena, seeing one of the children look very ragged, took out her little purse, and poured the whole of its contents into his hand. Frederick then proposed to her to walk a little further with him. She consulted Betty,—who was of opinion that, Mrs. Villiers could not possibly have any objection to it ; and Helena tripped away, desiring Betty to follow her. Betty promised ;—but, at that moment, was asked by Hannah Williams, the sick woman's eldest daughter, some important question respecting Mrs. Villiers's household—and “a good gossip” was what Betty could never resist. One anecdote produced another, and, while they were discussing the “home departments” of all the ladies within five miles round, Frederick and Helena were walking, and chattering, forgetting Betty, and losing their way.—They had turned into a lane that looked very green, and very pretty; and from thence entered a wood, into which they continued to advance for some time,

concluding that they should be perfectly sure of returning as they went. Helena, however, at length bethought herself of Betty, and looked round; but Betty was no where to be seen.

"We had better go back, Frederick: Mamma would not like me to go any further without Betty."

They did so; but made a wrong turn, and strayed further and further into the wood.—In a few minutes, they perceived something like a tent; and heard voices.

"Let us ask these people the way back," said Helena.

"These people" had also heard them:—and now, two women,

"Withered, and wild in their attire,"

came out from their concealment, and approached them. They were, in truth, a family of gipsies, who, having, for sundry depredations on the sheep-fold and poultry-yards, been driven from one county to another, had lately fixed themselves in this wood, from which they sometimes

emigrated, singly, or in small parties, to the village, in quest of provisions;—but they had not, yet, been actually detected in any enormities.

“ How d’ye do, pretty Miss ?” said the elder woman; “ give me a sixpence to cross your hand, and I ’ll tell your fortune.”

“ What’s telling my fortune ?” asked Helena.

“ Telling you how you shall have a great deal of money, and a coach and six, and a great many husbands—and if you will give me the sixpence, I will tell you a great deal more.”

“ But I have as much money as I want, and a poney that I like a great deal better than a coach, and I live with Mamma, and I don’t want any husband at all.—I wish you would show us the way back to——”

The woman, however, continued to detain Helena in talk, having particularly noticed her remark respecting money, and observed that she was dressed in the finest muslin, and had on a necklace fastened with gold.

She winked to the younger woman (who was her daughter), and still *gabbled* to Helena : then leading her, by degrees, a little on one side, pretended to show her the way out of the wood. The young woman in the mean time, played *her* part, and was earnestly addressing Frederick, and promising him a wife with blue eyes, and dark hair, and a dimple in her cheek, when he heard Helena's voice shrieking out his name. He darted forward, and seeing the elder gipsy in the act of dragging her away towards a thicker part of the wood, he called out, as he ran,

“ Stop, you, Mrs. Conjuror, this minute, or I'll have you taken up, as sure as you are ~~an~~ ugly old witch.”—

The woman ran the faster, and the girl tried to seize on Frederick ; but he threw her violently from him, and soon coming up with the old woman, seized her by the collar of her cloak, and, had she not released her victim, in a few moments she would have been strangled. He snatched the hand of Helena from her grasp, and

tucking it under his arm flung a large stick which he had taken up, to keep the woman at a distance ; and he was running off with the terrified Helena, when turning suddenly at the sound of a deep gruff voice from behind, they espied a man, with a complexion of a still darker tint than that of the females, advancing among the trees, with a dead sheep upon his back. On a sign from one of the women, he threw down the sheep, and hastened after the fugitives.

“ Don’t you dare to come a step further, you Sir ! ” cried Frederick, “ or you shall repent it.”

The man, however, still advanced, when Frederick taking up a large stone, promised faithfully to throw it at him if he approached. He hesitated—and at that moment, Frederick perceived a countryman, whom the frightened Betty, on missing Helena, had dispatched one way, while she ran, as fast as her legs could bear her, by another. The gipsy party now began to be a little apprehensive of the conse-

quences of being surprised with the sheep they had stolen, and immediately gave up the pursuit.

Frederick, having no wish but to conduct Helena safe home, entreated the countryman to guide them out of the wood.—He readily complied, and Frederick, after rewarding him for his services, hastened to Mrs. Villiers's with his beloved charge. They fortunately arrived just before the bewildered Betty ; who, having sought them in vain, was returning in despair to see whether the young stragglers had found their way home of themselves ; and, if not, to terrify her mistress, as she would infallibly have done, with the communication that “ Helena was lost—and—that there was a noted gang of gipsies in the neighbourhood.”

Helena, however, had now arrived, to tell her own story, in which Frederick's prowess was not forgotton ; and Mrs. Villiers, sufficiently alarmed at the danger which her darling had escaped, while she lavished on Frederick her praises, and ac-

knowledgments, implored him, and charged Helena, never more to venture a single step beyond the village, unless with Mr. Melcombe or herself.

The next day, Mr. Melcombe set on foot an inquiry after the gipsy establishment—but the party had taken alarm at the threats of the young gentleman, and the sight of the countryman; and decamped in the night;—they forgot not to carry off their sheep in triumph, and now no trace of them was to be seen but the ashes of the fire on which they had dressed their stolen repasts.

Helena's rambles being now restricted to the garden, she was consoling herself with old Bernard's conversation, when Mr. Melcombe called, to relieve Mrs. Villiers from all future apprehensions from the gipsies, by communicating the news of their departure. Frederick was with him, and Helena, seeing them walk towards her with her mother, ran to meet them—crying, “Now, dear Mamma, do, pray, let old Ber-

nard tell you his comical story about his going to London!"

"Well, Bernard," said Mrs. Villiers, "Helena tells me you have been in London, and that you saw very strange things there. I thought you had lived in this neighbourhood all your life, and had never been so far from home."

"Why, you see, Madam, I was borned in Surry; and lived farmer's man, and sometimes worked in the gentlefolk's gardens for a many years, man and boy:—so you see, the young girls as goes up from this country, a harvesting, did used to work for my master—and so I took a bit of a liking to one on 'em, but she would not have me, she said, without I would come and live in her country, near her father and mother, like. So I left my master, d'ye see, and married her, and comed here, and then I took to gardening, and here I ha' been ever since."—

"But you went to London before you ever came here, I suppose, Bernard?"

"Why, yes, Madam, I was o'telling

'o' little Miss how my master sent me once
with some wuts to market, and another
man wie' me."

"What are wuts, Mamma?"

"Surry for oats," said Mr. Melcombe.

"So you see, Madam, when it begun
to be dusk—for we was ordered to be in
Lunnun just before night, to be ready
for the first o'the market in the morning
—I got into a clutter o' carts, and such a
mort of people that I got a looking at 'em
to see what they was all a going about :—so
presently I goes back to my cart, as I thost,
and I said summut to the man wie' the
horses, thinking how it was the same as I
sot out with ; but he spoke sulky like, and
in a stre-ange voice—and surely there was
I with a waggon and a man I never see'd
before in all my life :—so off I sets, to look
for my me-ate—so I comes where there
was four or five roads, and what they called
the Oblus in the middle : I thinks how it
was at one Sir George's fe-alds, or some
sich a ple-ace. So I takes one road where
I sees a cart,—but that wasn't it—so, what

to do I didn't know ;—but I goes on, and on—and comes to a bridge ;—so then I thoft surely I was right, 'causen I knowed how I was to go over a bridge ; so, when I got into the town, I was mortal tired—and I axed where I was, and they tould me I was in Wessmister : so then I thoft I had gone quite and clean to the wrong town : so, says I, ‘ La ! dear, why I oft to a' gone to Lunnun.’ So then they fell a laughing, and said how I should never find out Lunnun if I goed away from Wessmister. So I thoft I would go on till I found some civiller like folks—so I went furder and furder, and some tould me one thing, and some another, and so it growed dark,—and I was got so tired and sleepy like, that I thoft as how I'd lay down and rest me a bit, till it was light again, and then I could find my way myself. So I sees a fine place with great postis over the door : so I lays me down, and falls fast asleep. By and bye, I hears such a clattering, and racketing o' horses and carriages, the coachmen swearing, and

driving along as the' they was all tosticated :—so up I jumps, and then to be sure I was frightened out o' my sinses, for I thoſt surely I must be killed in my sleep and got where all the bad people do bide : for first of all, to be sure I see'd the ould gentleman himself, and then, some wi' horns, and some wi' big noses, and some all over patchi-work like."

" Why old Bernard has certainly been to a masquerade ;" said Mr. Melcombe, laughing, aside to Mrs. Villiers.—

" And then, some as tall as the giant as shewed himself at our fair : and then again, some wi' flames in their hands, all flying about in every body's faces like ; and then, such a hallering, and bawling, and one pushing me, and another swearing at me —so says I, ' O ! dear good Mr. D—I, let me go back again to the other world, and I won't never be wicked no more.' So then, some on 'em cries out, ' The fellow be mad ;' and then they all run one way, and t'other, and I got out easy enough, so I runned as long as I could,

till I didn't see no more crowd—so then I e'en ax'd my way hoame again ; and when I got there I said how nobody should niver kitch me in Lunnun no more."

" Poor Bernard !" said Mrs. Villiers, laughing,—“ so you were frightened out of your wits, while the people that you were so afraid of were making inerry :—why they were only dressed up for amusement, Bernard.”—

“ La ! dear ! begging your Ladyship's pardon, if ever I see'd hobgoblins, and ould Nick at the head on 'em, I see'd 'em that there night—but I should say morning; for it was broad day-light ; so I could not be dreaming, you do know.” —

Mrs. Villiers, finding this persuasion inmoveable, gave up the attempt in despair, and Helena was happy, and full of triumph, at having, at last, gained her point, and prevailed on her mother to be entertained with old Bernard's wondersnl tale.

Frederick, whose time of returning to Eton drew near, entreated Mrs. Villiers

that they might all have one ramble together before his departure.

" You have not walked up the hills, Ma'am, I can't tell when : *do*, let us all go to-morrow." Mr. Melcombe seconded the proposal, and it was carried *nem. con.*

CHAP. VI.

THE next day, when the morning studies were concluded, the little party assembled, took an early dinner, and began their projected walk. Frederick was pilot. He had observed, in his wanderings in the wood, a path leading up an height which having never yet attained, he was extremely anxious to explore. He and Helena went prattling on ; and Mr. Melcombe and Mrs. Villiers engaged in a friendly and interesting conversation.

Helena began to lament to Frederick, his approaching departure. .

"I shall miss you so sadly when you go to school, Frederick."

"So shall I you, Helena, and I don't like going at all: but go I must, and let us not think about it."

"Aye, but you won't want me half so much at Eton, as I shall want you here."

"You at Eton!—a dove in a rookery—a fly in a bee-hive, a kitten in—"

"There, there—you need not call me any more odd things."—

They pointed to the spot on which the tent of the gipsies had stood;—and Helena described eagerly to Mamma, precisely where, and how, "the yellow woman began to run away with her."

They then pursued the path that led them up the mountain. The lakes began to lessen to their view; yet still the summit appeared to rise as they approached. Vast oaks, intermingled with the mountain-ash, were so far beneath their feet, that they obstructed not their view.—They now discovered a small spot that was sufficiently level to make them a seat, on which they

might rest, and admire the stupendous prospect around them.—Hills, surmounting hills, winding rivers, and rocks of a mellow grey, nearly covered with shrubs, and tangled bushes of the richest green, presented to their delighted eyes, all the glorious varieties of nature.

“ O how beautiful, Mamma !” cried Helena. “ It is sublime !” said Mr. Melcombe.

After a few minutes of silent contemplation he added,

“ The sun begins to redden, and grow broader.—I think we may safely watch its setting brightness, and yet reach home before it is dark.”

No one was inclined to move, and they saw its last beams upon the golden lakes (for such they appeared), and the lengthened shadows of the towering hills, at last, gradually vanished from their eyes.

“ T is a pity,” said Mrs. Villiers, “ but we must hasten homewards : I already fear the evening dews for Helena, who is very susceptible of cold.”

Helena sprang up in a moment, and approached nearer the edge of the precipice, to take a last look at the view ; which Mrs. Villiers observing, rose in great alarm to catch her back ; but the ground ran sloping towards the edge, and Mrs. Villiers in rising too hastily from her seat, trod on a loose stone which turned under her foot, and she fell some yards down the hill, which was so fearfully steep that she was in the utmost danger of being precipitated from the tremendous height, or bruised to death by the trees that might break her fall. Happily, however, one small tree, not far below, threw its head almost horizontally from the side of the mountain. The underwood caught her dress, and she hung for some moments—till Mr. Melcombe made a desperate dart down the steep, with his arms extended to catch at the tree—in which he succeeded—though not without bruising his arm by the rapidity of his descent. As soon as he had fixed himself on the tree, he seized Mrs. Villiers' hand, exclaiming,

" For God's sake, dearest creature, hold me fast—I now can save you !"

She grasped his hand, and put her arm over the tree, to which she clung, till, raising herself above it, she planted her foot above that of Mr. Melcombe, which he had set firmly in the ground ; and then, by clasping the rocky earth with her hands, she regained in safety the brow of the precipice. Helena was screaming on its edge, and Frederick, while he restrained her struggling attempts to descend it, looking in agony on all that passed, with no possible means of rendering any assistance.

Mr. Melcombe, by the help of his stick, which he had carefully preserved, made a temporary resting-place for his foot, and soon recovered his former situation.

Hurt and terrified as they were, they had but a few minutes, in which to pause, and recover themselves, before they were compelled by increasing darkness, to hasten their return. Mutual inquiries, trepidations, and rejoicings, were half lost in the momentous concern of cautiously descend-

ing the mountain, and pushing through the wood, while there remained a glimpse of day-light—for moon there was none. Mrs. Villiers, however, found breath to utter a few words which spoke every thing to Mr. Melcombe of the gratitude of her warm and tender heart for a life thus saved, at the imminent hazard of his own.

“ How can I ever thank you ? ” she concluded—“ it is quite, quite impossible ! ”—

“ Dearest, beloved Woman, talk not of gratitude :—God knows it was the extreme of selfishness—Oh ! if you knew how you are twined about this heart of mine ! ”—

Her hand was on his arm, and he pressed it closer to him.

“ Thank God ! thank God ! you are safe ! —but tell me, I implore you, are you *sure* that you are not hurt ? ”—

“ A little, I believe ;—but still more frightened.—My uncle is somewhat painful.”

“ Lean on me as much as possible”—said Mr. Melcombe—trembling so violently that he could scarcely support her.

"But, my good friend," said she, "I beseech you to take charge of Helena, in going down."

"Frederick shall go before with her, and you shall see that she is safe, but leave you *I cannot.*"

At length they reached the wood, as the shades of evening were closing around them. Mr. Melcombe carefully conducted them through it, and they saw not a human being, nor met with any further accident before they reached the village.

As soon as they arrived, Mr. Melcombe, who perceived that Mrs. Villiers was totally overcome with fatigue, and terror, entreated her to take some refreshment, and retire immediately to rest. She very readily promised compliance: when Mr. Melcombe and his pupil, the former under great anxiety as to the probable consequences of their late mischance, returned to the rectory.

When Frederick had retired to bed, Mr. Melcombe still trembling in body and mind, sat painfully retracing the dreadful alarm

from which they had been delivered. His memory presented him, with torturing fidelity, the image of the woman he so tenderly loved, hanging over immediate and inevitable death: such, for an instant, an age in agony, it had appeared to him, and scarcely, even yet, could he catch a gleam of consolation from the idea that it was himself who had saved her life. Far too much agitated to hope for sleep, he would not leave his study.—He took up a pen—he recollects that, first in his terror, and afterwards in his transport at the safety of his beloved friend, he had used some expressions of tenderness which were stronger than he had intended ever to use again, or, than, as he had reason to fear, she would approve. This was his apology for his trespass:—

“ My dear Friend ;

“ May I venture to use that sacred name while I implore your forgiveness for some expressions which escaped me on this dreadful evening ? when for one moment,

such a moment as I trust in Heaven I shall never endure again, I thought you were—gone for ever—Oh ! how has this danger shewn me, unhappy as I now am, how much more unhappy I might be. You are living—you are near me—and I hope you are not materially the worse for what I thought would have been fatal. I entreat you to let me know as soon as possible in the morning, how you feel, and how you have rested.—Life of my life! may Heaven watch over your slumbers !

“ But I began this to apologize for having too tenderly expressed my feelings, and, while I write, I offend again. After the few mournful, and, I fear, decisive words which you uttered on a former occasion, I made to myself a law to distress you no more with the tale of my unhappy emotions. You must, at the moment above alluded to, have read my heart ;—but, you do not yet know that your image has been stamped on it ever since our earliest acquaintance ; before you were married, I believe, engaged.—Situated as I

was, I dared not, *would* not speak. To have added to your comforts would have been the blessing of my life: to have solicited your hand while I could only invite you to poverty—no—I loved you too much for this! Late circumstances having betrayed me into expressions which have passed the bounds of friendship, this explanation became necessary—but, think not, most honoured and beloved of women, that I would seek to obtain even *your* favour by unwelcome solicitations, or win your compliance by pleading my constancy, or my sufferings. I have no merit in either. Let all merit rest with you, whose transcendent virtues have for ever fixed the affection which your person and manners originally engaged. If, indeed, your heart,—the only object of my soul's long ambition, be yet attainable—might I be allowed to hope that the ‘time to mourn’ may ever pass away, and that it were for *me* to be the happy being who could engage that gentle mind which has so long fed on the memory of departed happiness.—Oh!

might I but be suffered to feed on the possibility of attaining this high privilege, I would acknowledge the blessing with a fervour like that with which in all events I will pray for, and love you. Yes!—whether you shall, or shall not, be mine, yours will *I* ever be, while

“ MORDAUNT MELCOMBE.”

Having finished his letter, he read it over—then stared as he reflected that it was possible she might consider this as the most improper of all occasions for so ample a discovery of those feelings which she had hinted her desire that he would suppress for ever.

“ Will she not suppose that I am making a merit of my services?” said he within himself—“ yet, surely, she cannot so little understand me;—nay, but a few short hours ago, I disclaimed all title to her gratitude—I *must* explain to her the feelings which can alone be my excuse for those expressions that circumstances have wrung from my heart.”—

He thought—and thought again ; and, in the morning, the letter was sent. It was accompanied with anxious inquiries after the health of Mrs. Villiers and her daughter. The former had not yet risen ; for her ankle had been severely *bruised*, and she was, besides, extremely fatigued. This account was sent in answer to Mr. Melcombe's enquiries ; and the letter was for some hours unacknowledged.

It occasioned Mrs. Villiers the sincerest regret. Highly respecting, and deeply regarding Mr. Melcombe, she, however, felt it impossible to admit a second love to her heart,—and was utterly incapable of plighting her faith, without her love. She meditated long, and at last wrote thus :—

“ Will it not look like ingratitude to say that your letter gives me real pain ?— Yet how undeserving should I be of a suspicion like this ! At such a moment, when to you I owe that I still exist, I must be a wretch indeed could I feel any thing short of the most ardent gratitude—and ere I can pay the worthless tribute of my thanks for

the life you saved, your claims rise higher still, in virtue of an affection so long cherished, by me unknown, and even unthought of, and which struck its deep root beneath an adverse sky, escaped the scythe of Time, and has even outlived the blight of disappointment.—

“ Yet, though I am the unfortunate cause of embittering the life of one so capable of imparting, and so worthy to receive, all happiness, I am still the innocent cause. Never did I seek to win a regard which I could not return ; and I have told you, as I am sure you were convinced before, that I did not even suspect your preference of me at the early period to which you allude. And now—you ask me for my heart :—it is in the grave ;—or rather let me say, it is in Heaven—with him to whom, on earth, I gave it.

“ O that I could substantially prove to you the unchangeable fervour of my gratitude, for your affection, for your attentions—for my life. Claim any thing, my most respected friend, claim every thing

but the gift of a heart which is not mine—or a hand to which that heart could never be subjoined.

“ Let us not meet, for a few days to come—and then, let me entreat it—as friends, and *only* friends. By that name, and is it not a choice one?

“ I will be ever yours,
“ MARIA VILLIERS.”

To Mrs. Villiers.

“ Gentlest, and most amiable of human beings, I owe you eternal gratitude for your kind, your merciful letter. It tells me nothing but what I dreaded, what I expected.—Yet, weak as I am! I feel as if it brought a fresh disappointment. That it is *decisive* I know!—Its conclusion shall be obeyed—as shall every, the smallest wish of your heart, which you will yet indulge me by suffering me to execute.

“ I am afflicted—I confess it—and I shall afflict you if I write more.

“ Dearest, *only* Friend of my soul,
“ Farewell.
“ M. M.”

CHAP. VII.

A FEW days elapsed.—It was Sunday ; and Mr. Melcombe attended his church. He had frequently enquired after Mrs. Villiers, and still heard that, though daily, and rapidly amending, she had not yet entirely recovered from the consequences of her fall. He was, therefore, rather disappointed than alarmed, when, on casting his eye towards her seat, he perceived that she was not there.

Some few of his congregation there were, who observed that he preached on that day with less deliberation than was usual with him ; but I do not aver that it was true. This was certain, that his passing addresses to his parishioners were very concise, and that to their enquiries after his health, and advances towards conversation, he had made but very brief replies ; when he finished his bow, replaced his hat, and walked away.

"Mr. Melcombe is in a great hurry this morning,"—said an upright maiden lady.

"He is gone to see where Mrs. Villiers is, I dare say," said another.

"He *lives* at Mrs. Villiers's I think," said a short, round mamma, with a tall daughter on each side of her.

"I fancy he is Miss Villiers's *Tutor*,"—said one of the daughters, with a gentle toss of the head.

A fair, nicely dressed, elderly lady, leaning on the arm of a very pretty young one, had, as yet, said nothing. She now smiled, and concluded the speculation by observing, that she did not wonder Mr. Melcombe should pass so much of his time at Mrs. Villiers's, for that she was a sweet woman, and his little friend Frederick Beaumont she well knew was never so happy as when sharing the amusements of the sprightly Helena ; "and," she added, "very natural it is."

So saying, she made her courtesy, and walked home with her daughter ; and the coterie dispersed in silence.

It was very true that Mr. Melcombe, and Frederick with him, had taken the road to Mrs. Villiers's. They found her seated, with her foot resting on a stool. In answer to his anxious inquiries, she assured him that she was now quite well, and only a little too lame to walk, as usual, to the church.

"Did you see Mrs. —— and Miss ——? I have been thinking I am very uncivil to my neighbours, and must invite them to pass an afternoon with me very shortly. As I can now walk very prettily in a room, I may as well take the opportunity of being civil while I cannot ramble out of doors."

After some further indifferent conversation, studiously so on both sides—

"I wish," said Mr. Melcombe, "you would allow me to come and amuse you this evening with some new prints which I have just received from London. I have not yet opened them, having deferred it purposely, that I might enjoy the first sight of them with you:"—then, observing the

young ones in deep consultation over a sick canary-bird, he added, softly,

"I will observe conditions"—and he sighed heavily. Mrs. Villiers accepted his self-invitation, and thanked him for his attention respecting the prints. He then departed; taking Frederick along with him.

In the afternoon, he was faithful to his appointment,—and his promise; and, when tea was over, the children had liberty to amuse themselves. The prints were unfolded—laid on the table—and an hour glided swiftly away, in examining and admiring them. As Mr. Melcombe was successively turning them over, there appeared, in its turn, one piece, which, in a moment, fixed the gaze, the thoughts, the soul, of Mrs. Villiers. It was a fine engraving, by Heath, from a painting of Wright: its subject, "The dead Soldier." In the background is pictured a field of battle:—in front, under the shelter of trees from which a temporary awning depends, lies the body of the soldier; his dead hand fast locked in that of a young woman, whose face is

bent down dejectedly upon it. Not a feature can be seen of either: but the head, and figure, of the female are so disposed as to tell of grief in every line. On her arm reclines an infant—looking with childish carelessness out of the picture, and clasping in its little hand a finger of its dead father.

Mr. Melcombe instantly endeavoured to withdraw the print;—but Mrs. Villiers, whose eyes were arrested as by a basilisk, held it fast on the table. She trembled—she gasped for breath—and, at last, covered her face with both her hands, and wept bitterly. Mr. Melcombe was in agony:—for a single moment, this deep and final disappointment of all his dearest wishes, mingled with his sympathy, but, soon was his own misery absorbed in hers.

He started up, and retreated to a distant part of the room, in the hope that she would speedily recover herself;—but, it would not be:—again he sat down by her side;—removed the fatal representation—

pressed her hand in silence—soothed, and wept with her. At last, looking mournfully upon her—

“ Dearly, and for ever beloved, you have now, *indeed*, too painfully taught me what your heart is,—how utterly incapable of mutability, or forgetfulness!—Happy Villiers!—still so dearly honoured !

“ In death lamented, as in life belov'd !”

Sacred be his claims! never, oh never more, will I seek to usurp them!—Hear me, my friend, while I promise that I will henceforth impose the silence of death on my unsuccessful love;—and that, notwithstanding what I shall for ever feel,—from you I will ask nothing but tender friendship, and affection like the love of angels!—Will you console me with these?”

“ Will I?—O how cordially!—High esteem, sisterly regard, friendly confidence—all—all shall be yours—all *are* yours—but love alone.”—

“ And love, you well know, is worth them all, and includes them all—yet, let me not be ungrateful: what you *can* offer

me I receive into my inmost soul. In *my* estimation, friendship with you far out-values love with any other woman. To friendship, then, I devote my existence. It shall govern me during life—and if thou dies—” But that thought choked his utterance ;—he bent his head upon her hand, and bathed it with his tears.

Mrs. Villiers had never seen him thus affected before ;—it grieved her to see it now—and still more that his sufferings were for her sake, and her tears flowed fast with his. After some time, when the violence of his agitation had subsided,—he said to her in a voice of tender sorrow,—
“ And now, my friend, my sister ! once—once—let me press you to my heart !”—

She suffered this—then gently retreating, said,

“ I think you had better leave me for this day. Go, my friend, and endeavour to tranquillize your mind. Call up your wonted fortitude, and *teach me* how to bear the sorrows of life ; and never, never forget, that in me you have, and, while I ex-

ist, will ever have, a grateful, steady, and affectionate friend."

" Oh ! could I but content myself with that sweet assurance ! Yet, believe me, I will strive to give it all its value. I had flattered myself that I had some fortitude, some strength of mind—but now—well ! —I know that I ought to depart—if only that you may have time to compose your troubled spirits ;—yet, wonder not, that I linger, when you remember that this is the last—last day on which I may speak to you of love. Farewell!"—then, taking both her hands, and pressing them to his lips by turns, he, at length, departed.

It is too easy to imagine *what* were Mr. Melcombe's feelings on this trying scene. Mrs. Villiers's renewed regrets for her lost husband, and her generous concern for the sorrows of her disappointed lover, were also very poignant ; and as their feelings were, on various accounts, condemned to be totally suppressed, whenever they should meet, each perceived the wisdom, and necessity, of avoiding, for the present, any meeting

Mrs. Villiers devoted her whole time to the improvement of her daughter, and Mr. Melcombe busied himself in preparing Frederick for Eton, whither he was to return in a very few days.

CHAP. VIII.

THE next morning Helena came to her mother with swoln eyes, and a mournful countenance.

“ My sweet Helena, what’s the matter?”
Helena, sobbing violently,

“ Dicky’s dead, Mamma!—I found him quite dead in the cage.”

“ Is he indeed?”—said Mrs. Villiers sorrowfully; “ but my dear, dear love, you must not make an affliction of the death of a bird:”—yet, while she reproved, she clasped her darling to her heart, and kissed her fondly; neither could she, too, help sighing deeply for the loss of Dicky—nay, let

not wise men, and wise women, despise her too much, if she dropped a tear upon his memory : she did even more—for, when she saw his empty cage, she hastened to remove it out of her own view, and then took her pen, and commemorated him thus :—

Chorus

Go—desolated mansion go !—

Thy little tenant breathes no more !

Whate'er his song of joy, or woe,

That song of woe or joy is o'er.

No more shalt thou thy fluttering wing,

Gay, at thy tiny door expand

With fond caress—or softly sing,

Or peck the wild roots from my hand.

My bankrupt life can ill sustain

These simple joys to lose with thee—

Alas ! how dear the friendly strain

Of aught that ever car'd for me !

And thou, sweet bird ! with all thy powers

Wou'dst many a weary thought engage,

Still warbling through thy harmless hours,

Poor luckless captive ! in thy cage.

Thus unrepining might I brave

The ills I'm fated to endure !—

Bear life, till the all-quiet grave

Shall make, like thine, *my* peace secure !

In a few days after this little event, Frederiek came in, one gloomy, drizzling morning, to take his leave.

“ Mr. Melcombe has met with a gentleman going to London, and to-morrow I set off !”

Mrs. Villiers was very sorry—Helena was still more sorry—the fatal termination of Dicky’s illness, too, was communicated, and lamented anew by Frederick.

“ Good bye, Mrs. Villiers !—good bye, Helena ! How sorry I am to go ! how many long months I shall have to count between this and dear, dear Christmas, and what a deal of business I shall have to do in the mean time !”

“ So much the better, Frederick,” said Mrs. Villiers : and with kind wishes, and kisses from both, Frederick, with no very light heart, departed.

Mrs. Villiers exerted her spirits to amuse Helena, for the remainder of that day ; and, on the next morning, the readings, the musick, and the drawing, were resumed with peculiar attention.

Mrs. Villiers, on the day following, sent her projected notes of invitation to her neighbours, some of whom, and principally her favourites, resided at the distance of three or four miles from the village :— those who lived within it's boundaries, did not particularly suit her taste ; with the exception of the fair old lady (a widow, of the name of Lewis,) who had spoken of her with such sweetness and good-nature at the church-door. For this lady she already felt much kindness, and would, probably, have felt still more, had that little circumstance been known to her. Two of the more distant families were invited to dinner ; the nearer neighbours were asked to tea. She was debating what it was proper to do, in so general an invitation, respecting Mr. Melcombe, when he unexpectedly entered. Mrs. Villiers enquired after Frederick—talked of his journey—of Helen's occupations—&c. &c. ; and Mr. Melcombe, though evidently under much depression, also endeavoured to support an indifferent conversation. At last, he said,

" I was at Mrs. Lewis's yesterday, when your note of invitation was brought in, and it mentioned several whom she was to meet ; have I permission to be one ?"

" Certainly—I should be very sorry if you were not one."

" Should you indeed?—and will you give me your hand upon it ?" She gave it immediately.

Mr. Melcombe's visit was short, and embarrassed. The invitations were accepted, and the day drew near. Mr. Melcombe repeated his call, wishing to have another interview with Mrs. Villiers before they should meet in a party of strangers. He found her on a retired lawn within the shrubbery, and Helena was skipping, and prattling before her.

" What a natural grace there is in all her movements !" said Mr. Melcombe.

" And yet," said Mrs. Villiers, " I suppose she must learn to dance."

" Why ?"

" Because she must be like other people : she must understand steps, and positions,

and attitudes ; for though *we* think her sufficiently elegant, yet, she would be stigmatized by the fine misses in a ball-room, as ‘ dreadful ’—‘ *tramontane*,’ &c. if she were not to dance precisely like themselves ; and, besides, she is so fawn-like and frolicksome in every motion, that, dancing, I have no doubt, will be one of her favourite amusements ; but how she is to learn it *now*, when she ought to be learning it, I cannot conjecture.”

“ Why,—I will tell you whom I saw at Mrs. Lewis’s yesterday morning ; and then you shall judge whether the person described might not, without any great difficulty, be prevailed on to be her master. It was a little skipping French Marquis, about a yard and a half long, and as narrow as a walking-stick, that seemed fitted for nothing else. He remained not a great while after I entered, and when he was gone, Mrs. Lewis told me (and with all her good-nature she could not help laughing at him), that he had been entertaining her for two hours with his own history,

and his own praises. He is an *émigré*, and, apparently, a very poor one. He was, before this *glorious* Revolution, Le Marquis de Sanspareil—a *modest* name he gave to an estate which he bought, and which, after his arrival in England, he as modestly converted into a title. The title, indeed, he still continues to bear, though he has little more to support it than what he receives from the public contributions raised in England. But neither his own afflictions, nor those of his country-men, have the slightest effect on his spirits, and poor Mrs. Lewis was sadly *ennuyée* with having only listened to him. He is here for the benefit of his health, in a poor lodging at a farm-house, having been ordered to drink goat's whey: he has probably talked himself into a consumption, but I dare say he will *dance* a slong as he can breathe.—You seem to walk charmingly to day: suppose you were to call on Mrs. Lewis—she would do much for *you*, I know—and prevail on her to send for him, and use as much of her delicacy as she thinks necessary to *him*,

in enquiring whether he would like to undertake the tuition of your daughter, on whatever terms he should approve. I have no doubt that he will acquit himself well: they all dance—those of high rank, generally, very finely."

Mrs. Villiers thanked her kind friend for the suggestion, and gladly followed his advice. Mrs. Lewis, on her part, readily undertook the commission, to which, it was added, that, if the Marquis did not object to the proposal, he should be invited by Mrs. Lewis to accompany her to Mrs. Villiers's on the evening of the proposed engagement.

Every thing succeeded to their wish, and Le Marquis de Sanspareil being unable longer to restrain his impatience to see Mrs. Villiers, both because he had heard she was very handsome, and because he had never seen her before, went to Mrs. Lewis, on the appointed afternoon, at so very early an hour, that, though she used all her eloquence in endeavouring to prevent him from intruding, and occasioning

her to intrude, upon Mrs. Villiers's dinner party, go he would, and Mrs. Lewis and her daughter were obliged to go with him, before any of the evening visitors had arrived. Mrs. Villiers and her ladies left the dinner-table as soon as, with propriety, they could, and adjourned to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Lewis presented to her Le Marquis de Sanspareil.

This *little great man*, aware of the purpose for which he had been invited, put himself into the exact position which Vestris had prescribed, as that, in which it was indispensable to make a bow. It was a bow of the most scientific construction,—and the expression he meant to convey into it was, not simply reverence, but adoration.—Having, as he hoped, displayed his person, and movements, to the highest advantage, he now set himself seriously to the business of flattering Mrs. Villiers.

“Ah! que vous êtes charmante! how charming you are, Madame! and how de report of your divine beauty come so short to de trute! de Venus in de beauty, de Juno

in de majesté, and de Minerve in de visdom."

" You are very polite, Sir," said Mrs. Villiers, endeavouring to avoid laughing; " but as to my wisdom, (to say nothing of my other perfections) I am afraid you are not yet quite a competent judge of it, and that, when you have fathomed its whole depth, you will find Minerva had considerably the advantage of me."

" *O que non! ma chere dame*—I do see it in your eyes—and I do 'ear it in your words."

After a few more compliments, couched in terms of equal delicacy, tea and coffee were ordered, and, Mr. Melcombe having made an early proposal to move, the gentlemen soon appeared. Mr. Melcombe was much amused at observing that the Marquis was perfectly at home by the side of Mrs. Villiers; in whose service he unremittingly drew on his imagination, and his memory, for new exaggerations of panegyrick. Mr. Melcombe took a vacant chair on the other side of her, and—(quite

accablée by the Marquis's flatteries)—she was happy to take refuge in his ever welcome conversation.

The Marquis, believing he had for ever established himself in Mrs. Villiers's good opinion, turned suddenly to a young lady, who also sat next to him, and who had not, hitherto, shared his notice; yet, on whom it would not have been so unhappily wasted as on Mrs. Villiers. This was a Miss Angle; she was not without accomplishments, but neither was she without a somewhat too lively sense of them.—She had some beauty, too;—that is, she had large, well-formed, hazel eyes, a clear complexion, and two rows of very white, regular teeth. The expression of her eyes was—not much;—but it would have passed without criticism, had she not fatally imagined that it *ought* to be of the softest kind: at the same time, an open smile was frequently necessary to the proper disclosure of her teeth. She had rather a lively mind, and could have appeared to some advantage in conversation, but, since to languish and simper was

unavoidable, she too frequently forgot to converse.

" Ah, Mademoiselle !" cried the Marquis, "*que je vous demande pardon !* how I ask your pardon for not spik to you soonére ! but—I am ver moche afraid dat I shall repent me dat I spik to you at all—*Ah cet air languissant !*—how it become you ! and how it vounđe my 'arte !—and dat smile ! and de teet like de pérles !"

The smile and the languish were intensified by these praises, which the lady, being but too credulous on such points, and not having been much accustomed to the society of Frenchmen, unfortunately received *à la lettre*.

Among the gentlemen of the party, were an old military officer, and a young one, his son : both of them were remarkably susceptible of humorous impressions, and had a turn of fancy so congenial, that whatever was ridiculous in character, or manner, instantly, and similarly, struck them both ; and the more strongly, of course, when they were in the company.

of each other. The incomparable Marquis was at this moment the subject of their common speculation.—The old Colonel (Trelawney by name)—had driven many a squadron of Frenchmen to their tents.

“ While they were monkies like this,” said he to himself, “ there was no sport in conquering them :—now they are tigers, there is no honour—or, not a whit more than in running down any *other* of the savage race.”

The Marquis, having exhausted the theme of Miss Angle’s praises, recurred, as was usual with him, to that which was not to be exhausted,—the ever-springing fountain of his own. Anxious to possess Mrs. Villiers with a full idea of his capering powers, he led immediately to the subject, and, after a very short introduction, began to acquaint her with their extent.

“ Ma chère dame, I was de best dançêre in Paris. “ I did learn of de Vestris—till he observed dat it vas high time for me to teash him. O ! if you ad seen me danse de minuet vid les Duchesses—les

Comtesses—at de court of poor Louis!—as for de Queen; if any body did but spik, she you'd say—‘ *Silence!—taisez vous, je vous prie! c'est Monsieur le Marquis qui danse.* ’”—

At this Colonel Trelawney and his son exchanged looks, and laughed in safety, trusting to the impenetrable veil of the Marquis's vanity for concealing the cause of their mirth.

“ Was not the King a little jealous of you, Monsieur? ”—asked Colonel Trelawney, with a look of profound gravity.

“ I did never 'ear it Sir!—you do pierce my 'art to tell me so!—*Oh le pauvre homme!* —*Oh Louis!* —*Oh mon Roi!* ”—

It was not within possibility for the company to preserve grave faces any longer, and Mrs. Villiers, fearing that he might at last discover himself to be the object of general ridicule, solicited Miss Angle to oblige the party with a lesson on the Piano Forte. Proper refusals followed, and many protestations about being totally out of practice, &c. Yet, she cast on Mr. Melcombe a

soft glance which seemed to solicit a solicitation—but—it did not come,—and Miss Angle was under the mortifying necessity of playing to oblige Mrs. Villiers. She played a modern piece, and with brilliant execution, but with so many bends and contortions, that her audience, who had begun with admiring, were very soon entirely taken up with condemning, and lamenting. She was then asked to sing—and here unfortunately she did *not* excel.

“ Her voice was shrill—and rather loud than sweet,”—

yet, most unhappily conceiving that the piano was her *forte*, and the exquisite Marquis’s fiat respecting the *air languissant* still murmuring in her ear—she began—(with an air and expression, by which she intended to imitate a dying Saint, and in a voice that did really imitate a peacock,)—

“ Angels ever bright and fair.”—

This strain she began—and, as in a private assembly, there is, alas ! no seal for the lips

Colonel Trelawney had never in his life experienced the passion of terror before, for he had never before been in such imminent hazard of suffering his keen sense of humour to obtain a triumph over his politeness to a woman, which, with him was only held less sacred than the laws of war. He examined the figures of the carpet with the utmost minuteness lest he should catch the eye of his son. His son, under a similar apprehension, had long been employed in a no less accurate scrutiny of the ceiling.—The Colonel bit his lips, his gloves, and his fingers, and had almost succeeded in choking himself, when, venturing at length to raise his eyes, he suddenly missed his son.

“Where’s Charles?” said he.

“Just jumped out of the window,” said Mrs. Lewis, who was endeavouring, though nearly in vain, to keep herself from convulsions; for she had caught the irresistible look with which Charles had given up the point, and made his extraordinary escape.

"Would I had jumped after him!" said the Colonel, "What am I to do?"

"Think of Bonaparte giving laws to England," said Mrs. Lewis. He looked at her almost fiercely, nay an oath was on the tip of his tongue, but it died there in reverence to the lady who had called it into life, and he thanked her heartily for putting him in a passion, and thus restoring him from the agony of smothered laughter.

Mrs. Villiers, in pity to Miss Angle, rose, and approached her—then placed herself so as to obscure the Colonel and his companion from her view, and made her acknowledgments with determined gravity for the entertainment she had afforded the company; observing, a little jesuitically, that the piece was one of very difficult execution.

The only person in the circle who was absolutely uninfected with the ridicule of this scene, was—the Marquis;—who just at the commencement of the song, had discovered that he sat opposite to a look-

ing-glass :—from that moment he heard nothing :—but sat ogling his own image, with an idolatry which neither sounds, nor other sights, had power to disturb.

Mr. Melcombe followed Mrs. Villiers to the Piano Forte, from which Miss Angle was rising, and said in a low voice,—

“ Now then, let me hear one overture of Handel from you.”

Mrs. Villiers immediately complied.—She was a very fine performer of Handel, and enthusiastic in her fondness for his works. She played the Occasional overture ; filling out the chords in their full harmony, by borrowing from the parts allotted to other instruments, and giving to it every various expression intended by the composer. The march she touched with a trembling finger,—but she finished it with the true spirit. The veteran Colonel beat time to it on his knee, with a vigorous hand ; and cried out in transport, “ There’s a march that would lead *children* to battle ! wou’d it not, my pretty ? ” drawing towards him the smiling Helena,

who was standing by the side of Mrs. Lewis.

“O yes Sir! and if Bonaparte comes Mamma can play it for Mr. Melcombe and Frederick to go and kill him.”

He hugged her in a transport to his heart, and for the rest of the evening, stationed her on his knee.

Another half hour passed, in which the conversation was divided into duets and trios—when Mrs. Villiers took occasion to acquaint the Marquis that she should be happy if he would call on her the next morning, that they might regulate their future engagements. His raptures were unbounded—he was *transporté—charmé—ravi—&c.*

The visitors now paid their last compliments, and departed—all but Mr. Melcombe, who lingered awhile after the rest. As soon as they were gone Helena began :—

“Mamma—what makes Miss Angle make faces when she sings?”—

“Why, perhaps,” said Mrs. Villiers, turning to Mr. Melcombe, “if the lady

could hear that question, she might leave it off."

"I wish to Heaven she could, then ;" answered he.—"When I last heard that song it was from Mara, and I confess that, in hearing it to-night, I was not so happy as the laughing Colonel and his son, for I protest to you I was almost mad."

"What a pity it is !" said Mrs. Villiers, "for she plays extremely well."—

"Ye—s," said Mr. Melcombe—"that is—very neatly and very rapidly ; but with no more soul than Maillardet's Automaton, and yet she means to be *all* soul.—

"What a cruel thing it is, that pretty women, and elegant women, and even sensible women, should so often split upon a rock so fatal as affectation. No less a man than Locke has excellently stigmatized this fault as 'an acquired ugliness.' "

Mrs. Villiers now attended to Helena's question,—and explained to her the nature of this sin, for such she thought it.

Mr. Melcombe then said to her, with a half-glance at her mother,—

" Helena, if ever *you* fall into the error of affectation, you will not have the shadow of an excuse.—But—I suppose I must now finish this unconscionable visit!"—and he put out his hand for Mrs. Villiers's, which she frankly gave ;—and he detaining it a few moments,—softly sighed—" Farewell!"—He gave a kiss to Helena, and was just departing, when she looked up at him, and, in her innocent caressing manner, said,

" What a pity you are going away, Mr. Melcombe!—how I should like you to come and be my papa, and live here always!"

" O thou little tantalizing tormenting dear!"—said he mournfully—and, catching her in his arms, he ventured one look of tender reproach over her shoulder, at her *cruel* Mamma, who walked aside in confusion and distress :—and then—without another word, hurried away.

CHAP. IX.

ON the following morning Mrs. Villiers's servant announced "The Marquis de Sanspareil." He immediately entered—and put himself into due raptures at "the honour of this summons,"—"the felicity of the preceding evening,"—"the charms and accomplishments of Madame,"—and "the bewitching elegance and vivacity of Mademoiselle her daughter,"—whom he was "very certain she would soon see, under his tuition, *une vraie Parisot.*"

"Not quite, I hope, Sir"—said Mrs. Villiers—"You will excuse my venturing to give *you* the slightest hint; but I should particularly wish her to dance without any attempt at the steps, or attitudes, of the Opera, and to be accomplished only in walking, and dancing a minuet, gracefully; with the addition of such steps as are necessary for country dances, and cotillions. In short, Monsieur le Marquis, my desire

is, that she should move, and dance, exactly as a lady ought to do."

"*Ah! Madame, c'est bon ça!—voila tout ce qu'il faut—Elle le fera.* She shall do it; you may take my word. I am devote to you and Mademoiselle."

And now, the terms, the days of attendance, and other preliminaries were properly arranged. Helena had her first lesson on the very next day; Mrs. Villiers privately entreating the Marquis to be moderate in his commendations:—but, knowing at the same time, that this was not in his nature, she took an early opportunity of explaining to Helena that "the Marquis's mode of address was only a *way* that the French gentlemen had,—which meant nothing, but was equally applied to all persons, whether skilful or awkward, handsome or otherwise, and was,—the fashion of the country."

Helena, however, was in much greater danger of laughing at her master, than of being intoxicated by his admiration: and his whimsical grimaces, and affected postures, his profound bows, and eternal vo-

lubility, often irresistibly tickled her mischievous fancy.

One day when she had taken particular pains in making a courtesy for him, he said,—“ Mademoiselle, I tank you for dat courtesy : it is so moche superieure tq de oder as dc light and de darknesse.”

The Marquis was not very accurate in his ideas, and still less so in his English idiom, and the confusion of his present imaginations, aided by the serious air in which they were delivered, worked so powerfully on her muscles, that she lost all command of them, and laughed outright ; till Mrs. Villiers, giving her one of her serious looks, restored the composure of her features in a moment.

Helena was less fond of dancing than either of music, reading, or geography : chiefly, perhaps, because she was not quite so fond of her dancing-master as of her mother, and Mr. Melcombe.

She improved, however, very rapidly—for, she took great pains ; and this because she saw that it was pleasing to her mother,

her love for whom was the ruling passion of her little heart.

The Marquis delighted to dance before his pupil, when it was proper to shew her what she was to do ; for he was at the same time, displaying his graces to Mrs. Villiers : who saw, with as much satisfaction as the subject was capable of affording her, that he was indeed a perfect master of the science, which in his eyes was of the last importance. He concluded one of his lessons by informing her, that “ *Mado-moiselle improved so fast as he could vish,* and that, for his part, he did spare no pains :”—adding in a tone of the utmost solemnity,—

“ *If I should to die to-morrow I should lay my 'and upon my 'arte, and say dat I have done my duty.*”

CHAP. X.

THREE months thus passed away, and every succeeding day was marked by Helena's improvement of the various talents which she had been taught to cultivate. She continued, occasionally, her little excursions with Mr. Melcombe; and, as they rode, he delighted to awaken her young ideas by lectures adapted to their strength and capacity. He would often descant on the various phenomena of vegetable and animated nature; draw forth her recollections on the books that were known to her, open her mind to the first impressions of history, which in their more serious hours he would frequently read, and explain to her—and Mrs. Villiers perceived with mingled gratitude, and sadness, that the improvements and the amusements of her child (and she could not but see that it was for her own sake) were the

objects which engaged the greater part of his time, and his cares.

One day that he came in to propose a walk with herself and Helena,—

“ Let us call on Goody Williams,” said Mrs. Villiers ;—“ I have not seen her since she recovered from her long illness.”

They passed old Bernard, as he was working on the roads.

“ How d’ ye do Bernard ?” said Mrs. Villiers, “ why, you look very rosy, and healthy.”

“ O yes, thank you Madam, I am brave and hearty, though I’m a good tightish age too ; I be in my seventy-five ; but I’ve had an unaccountable share o’ health : I a’ never been sick nor sorry since the year fifty-one.”

“ Well ! I thought you were only a gardener, Bernard : this is hard work for you.”

“ Hard ! no, no, Madam. I can move mountains wi’ my tackle.”

When they arrived at Goody Williams’s

cottage, Mrs. Villiers—" hoped she was quite recovered from her long illness."

" Yes, indeed, and thank Cot and your latiship, I am ferry well, as effer I wass in my life."

" And how do all your children do ? all well, and all good I hope."

" Yes, and please your latiship, they are all well, and ferry coot children : only my pest chilt d' ye see is a long way off ; and liffes coachman to a creat family, and I calls him my pest, pecauss he can do more for me than the rest : and he is so stingy of his clothes, and takes care of 'em, my laty —to sent 'em all to his poor father—Oh my dear Tafit ! I 'm sure I prayss for him night and morning : and as for the morn-ing, you see, Matam, what little matters I wants for myself, I prayss for 'em while I makes my pet, and pushes my rooin ; and then I downs o' my knees, and prayss for my Tafit."

Our little party smiled at the good woman's simplicity, and as they walked on, observed, how much more strongly she was

attached to “the coot chilt that *could* help her,” than to any of the rest.—

“It is sometimes the case with her superiors,”—said Mr. Melcombe. “Let us walk by the river,” he continued,—“we are now in the path which leads to the wood, and that part of the mountain to which I have not *courage* to go.”

“And where I”—said Mrs. Villiers, “ought to erect a temple to *Gratitude*.”

“Hush my sweet friend, do not *you* break conditions, lest *I* should.—You know not half the merit of the silence I impose on myself.”

They were now by the river side, and admired the effect of a bright crescent moon, sparkling not only in the heavens, but in the water. They walked on in various discourse for some time, but it was a chill October evening, and much sooner than they wished, they thought it prudent to return towards home. Tiger was with them, and, being as gay as Helena, and still nearer to *his* infancy than she was to hers, made her a very pretty play-fellow,

and they ran races together till they reached the village.

Mr. Melcombe took leave of his amiable friend at her garden gate, and walked, deeply ruminating, to his own. His house, as he approached it, looked dark, and cold—and, he fancied, more solitary than usual. He turned his steps from the door—and crossed the lawn. The moon had set—but the stars shone bright above his head. He gazed on them with enthusiasm—

“ Yet here”—said he, in a whispering voice—“ here, also, I am alone.—I found what might have made the charm of my existence—but when the blessings of Fortune fell upon me, I had lost all chance of enjoying them—by sharing them with her, who would—at least who *could*,—have doubled their ~~in~~ value !”

CHAP. XI.

HELENA, longing for another run by the river side, one day began coaxing her mamma to go with her.

"I can't my love; I am busy:—but you may take Betty and go a little way with her, if you will promise me not to leave her side for a single moment."

"I will not, *indeed*, Mamma."

Under the care of Betty, then, Helena once more ventured beyond the village, and hastened to her favourite walk, on the banks of the river.

They were just returning, precisely within the time prescribed, when, as they were passing through a gate which opened from a meadow to the road, a poor, little, dirty, ragged girl came trembling up to them, begging, in a piteous tone, for a morsel of bread, for that she had tasted nothing for four whole days.

Betty, who knew this to be impossible,

and had besides observed her complexion to be of a deep, or rather tawny brown, was seized with terrible alarm, and felt perfectly convinced that the gipsies had returned into the neighbourhood. She therefore began to drive her away, and told her she was a little tricking hussey : then, perceiving that her young lady, unable to move from an object of so much misery, was beginning to question the little beggar respecting her situation, her parents, &c. cried out very angrily,

“ Lack-a-daisie ! Miss ! how can you stand talking to this low-lived dirty brat, who I dares to say, belongs to that gang o’ gipsies ! You know your mamma would be very angry with you for speaking to her, and staying out so late.”

“ Mamma *won’t* be angry with me, Betty, for speaking to a poor, little, child that is ready to die,—and I shall take her home to Mamma, I *assure* you, and ask her for some meat and bread, and some of my clothes for her—come with me, little girl.”

“God bless you, Miss,” said the child, in the canting tone of her trade—and tripped along very readily after them. When they reached home, Mrs. Villiers was just about to enquire of Helena how she came to exceed her time, when all her attention was suddenly drawn to the wretched occasion of the disobedience, and she immediately desired to know who, and what, she was.

“Mamma, she says she is quite starved”—said Helena weeping—“and you *see*, Mamma, she is all ragged!—pray, pray, give her some of my clothes, and something to eat.”

Mrs. Villiers hastily ordered her some food, which she devoured with frightful eagerness—and then proceeded to examine her very closely with respect to the particulars of her situation.

It appeared, from her story, that she had been with the gipsies—that she was asleep in the tent, when Frederick and Helena were in the wood, but, after she awoke, had heard her mother conversing

about them with her companions for a considerable time. Her "Mammy," she said, "would often beat her severely—and sometimes tell her that she was not her child, and that she heartily wished she could get rid of her, for that she was so stupid she would never be of any use to her in her business. She remembered something about 'another Mammy who had been 'good to her, and used to call her 'My poor 'Marian.''"

The conclusion of the tale was, that the gipsies, finding her an incumbrance in their flight, as she could not walk so fast as they did, and as they wanted their jack-ass to carry the dead sheep, had driven her away from them, and set off with all possible speed without her; adding, that she had been found by a *farmer gentleman* in the harvest time, and he had made her work so very hard, that, at last she had run away and had been begging and sleeping under the hedges ever since.

Mrs. Villiers was well satisfied that the child had been stolen. She seemed to be

about eight years old, though she could hardly discern her real appearance through her present disguise of dirt and rags. Betty was accordingly ordered to cleanse her thoroughly, to dress her in some of Helena's apparel : and to give her a bed in the house, for the present night, at least. The immediate necessities of the child being thus provided for, Mrs. Villiers delayed all farther determinations respecting her till the morning. Every thing was done that had been directed, and when the girl was properly washed and attired, she was brought in to be looked at, and Mrs. Villiers at once observed, that, together with the uncleanly coating of her face, had disappeared much of the tawny hue of her complexion, and that she was a pretty little brunette, though pale and much reduced by starving and ill usage. Helena skipped about her in transport—

“ O what a pretty little girl, Mamma ! pray do let me have her for my little maid, and she can have my clothes, you know,

when I have done with them.—Can you read, little girl?"

"No, Miss."—

"Won't you like to learn?"—

"Yes, Miss."

"I can teach her you know, Mamma."

—Mrs. Villiers was musing on Helena's petition—She sent the poor little thing into the kitchen, and then said—"Helena—could you find time to teach this little girl, if I were to let you have her for an attendant? As she has been among the gypsies, it is probable that she has as yet been accomplished in nothing except lying and stealing."

"O yes, Mamma! I am sure I could teach her to read and work; and then I must tell her it's very naughty to lie, and steal, you know—I might have been just like her, Mamma, if it had not been for you!"

"But then, you must either play less, in the garden, or rise earlier in the morning, you know, for I cannot have one of your own improvements neglected."

"O yes! I will get up *very* early, and never play, nor be idle, if you will but let me have her, dear, dear Mamma."

"But we must try to find out her own mother, must we not, Helena?—before we take entire possession of her."—

"Yes—to be sure, Mamma."

"You shall not lose all your play-hours, nor all your exercise,—but if you will positively find time to teach her *every* thing, and yet neglect nothing that you have to do yourself, and—if, I cannot discover her parents—or if, on discovering them I obtain their consent, why—you shall keep her."

The transports of Helena's gratitude knew no bounds; and the poor little Marian, for so she was now called, when she heard the news in the morning, cried for joy. .

Helena fulfilled, in every point, the conditions laid down by her mother, and seemed to improve in attention to her own concerns, in proportion to the extent of the service which she had undertaken for

another. At first, as Mrs. Villiers had expected, there was much to be *unlearned*. Her little protégée, had certainly begun with a direct falsehood, respecting the period of her involuntary abstinence ; and of other falsehoods she was occasionally found guilty, together with a few attempts at pilfering, which, for some little time, she continued to put in practice : but, Mrs. Villiers easily discerned, through all, a certain native simplicity of character, and a total want of adroitness in the commission of her offences, which she now concluded had constituted the stupidity of which the gipsy had accused her. Taking, then, the tuition of her heart into her own care, she soon succeeded in eradicating the worst of her evil propensities ; and in a very few months, the favoured Marian, besides being an object of unceasing interest and amusement to Helena,—began to do real credit and honour to her instructions,—as also to the more serious admonitions of Mrs. Villiers. That amiable woman had immediately taken every possible means,

by enquiries, and advertisements, to discover the parents of Marian—but in vain. No claimant appeared; and she was, in consequence, established as the attendant, and companion of the little Helena.

CHAP. XII.

THE days, and the months, and the years rolled away—and Helena, from a little playful child, has insensibly grown into a lovely and accomplished girl.

Frederick continued to pass his vacations at the Rectory, till, in his seventeenth year, Mr. Melcombe received a letter from Mr. Beaumont, requesting that his son might pass those intervals, for the two following years, with a gentleman in London, whom he named, and who had long wished to have Frederick occasionally at his house. It was now the desire of his father that he should accept this invitation, for the benefit of learning of the best masters to

fence, and ride, and also of being familiarized with the manners of the world, including the advantages of strengthening his Eton connexions, and enlarging his acquaintance with higher life.

At the end of this period, and when all these objects had been happily accomplished, Frederick joyfully set out from London, and still more joyfully arrived at the dwelling of his Patron, Tutor, and Friend.

He was now eighteen years of age. Mr. Melcombe, who had not calculated the effects of time at this critical period in the life of man, was equally delighted and surprised at the improvement in his air, and stature, as well as at the healthful floridity of his appearance. Much more was he gratified on perceiving, that, noble as his countenance had originally been, it was elevated to a still more dignified expression, and that a brighter ray of intelligence shot from his eye. They had, mutually, much to say : but Frederick wished not to say it all, till he had just looked at Mrs. Villiers, and

Helena, after this intolerable length of absence.

“ Cannot we go to them this evening, Sir ?”

“ Why, my dear Frederick, it is rather late, at present, and I think it will be more respectful to send our enquiries before us, with a proper notice that we will wait on them to-morrow.”

“ To breakfast, then, Sir !”

“ With all my heart—if we have their permission.”

They, accordingly, offered themselves to breakfast, and were accepted. The hour arrived. It was a bright summer morning, and Mrs. Villiers had ordered the table, daintily and elegantly spread, to be prepared in a shady arbour. There was the lady seated, and Helena by her side; when Frederick, having followed Mr. Melcombe in due form into the garden, could *follow* no longer, but flew by him like an arrow: —in a moment, a hand of each fair friend was in his own ;—and he overflowed with happiness.

When the first tumults of his tender greetings, enquiries, and caresses, had a little subsided, darting an animated glance at Helena, who, with her mother, had risen at his approach,— he exclaimed with a start—

“ But Helena!—my dear girl!—Heavens!—how you are grown!—and how well—how capitally well you look!”

Helena's blushes at this warm approbation were not entirely unconnected with an agreeable triumph. She thought that Frederick, too, was looking wonderfully well; but she felt, without exactly knowing why, as if she ought not to say so. She endeavoured to rally off this little first embarrassment; saying,

“ Well! now you are come back at last, sit down, and we will reward you with some breakfast.”—Helena made the tea—Frederick insisted on taking the management of the coffee: but the gaiety of his spirits was mingled with a certain surprise and trepidation, at the perception of Helena's improvements, which disordered all

his operations. He watched her every look, and movement, through even the least of which some furtive unexpected grace was still diffused ; and, as he was admiring her taper fingers, while they poured out the tea, he threw the sugar into the coffee-pot, and the coffee into the tea-cups—abused, and then excused himself—boasting what a good fag he had been at Eton—

“ But I have done with fagging so long, that I have forgotten it all, and, besides, I am just now too happy to know very exactly what I am about.”

“ No, nor any thing like exactly,”—said Helena; “ suppose, now, you try whether you can help Mainma to some strawberries. I do think that is within your capacity.”

In this he succeeded ; but,—when he presented to Helena a cup of coffee, the hand that held it trembled—and, venturing once to encounter the full radiance of her starry eyes, he caught himself heaving a profound sigh,

They were all much too happy to part that day. Mrs. Villiers invited her guests to dine with her, and make it completely a day of friendship, and reunion.

They accepted the invitation with delight, and passed the remaining hours in strolling, or sitting, sometimes in divided parties, occasionally all together, and, in every varying situation, delightedly employed in talking over plans, and amusements past, present, and to come.

In the evening, the sight of the Piano-Forte awakened the musical enthusiasm of Frederick, and he besought Helena to let him hear her improvements. She sat down without hesitation, and surprised him with a degree of proficiency which surpassed his most sanguine hope.

"When do you intend to sing, Helena?"

"O," said Mrs. Villiers, "she can sing a little now. Sing my favourite canzonet from Haydn, Helena."

It was, "My mother bids me bind my hair," &c. Perhaps, in the whole circle of musical compositions there was nothing

that so peculiarly suited Helena's style both of singing and playing—light, elegant, and tender, it requires a touch of extreme delicacy, a voice of flexible sweetness, and an expression of lively sensibility. To Frederick it was wholly new. He was breathless with attention. When she came to—

“ The village seems asleep or dead,
When Lubin is away”—

she chanced to look up during the closing strain, and her eye met that of Frederick. She blushed, and withdrew it. He, too, lowered his eyes for a moment, but they rose again. When she had ceased, he seemed afraid to speak, lest some sweet note should yet be lingering on her lips.

“ She sings it as if she had composed it,” said he, to Mrs. Villiers.

“ Yet, she has not even learned to sing at all,”—replied Mrs. Villiers.

“ Nay, my dear lady, *you* have taught her, and Nature has taught her. With such a voice as hers, that song required

no more. To sing it with too much simplicity is impossible."

Frederick sat ruminating on the powers of musick from the lips of beauty. His profound silence produced a pause in the conversation of his friends. He observed it, and cried out,

"One more song, Helena, if you have any compassion."

She sung a lively roundelay, and he thought it still more enchanting than the other: so, at least, he thought at the moment; but the *first* was that for which he most frequently petitioned, and which he always called his *bijou*.

Frederick had now left Eton, and was the bearer of letters from his master to Mr. Melcombe, and Mr. Beaumont, containing the most exalted testimonials, respecting his dispositions, his abilities, and his conduct. He had attained every distinction and reward that was ever proposed in that seminary for the encouragement of application and genius. His master was

proud of his acquirements, and his school-fellows regarded them without envy, because he was not proud of them himself.

His name was respected by all to whom it was known, and his intimates loved him like a brother.—Thus graced with accomplishments, and crowned with early honours, he was now to enter on a wider field of improvement, in the university of Oxford—where, though the idle may learn to be dissipated, the diligent may find the path to wisdom, wealth, and fame.

CHAP. XIII.

IN the mean time, the happy Frederick was stationed, for a period of two months, in his favourite abode; and resumed the readings with Mr. Melcombe, the rides with Helena, and the rambles on the mountains.

One afternoon he wandered out alone. He was singularly fond of exploring new

ways, and would afterwards conduct his friends to the same spots, for the purpose of delighting them with his discoveries. On the present occasion, he extended his walk to a distance of several miles, and was slowly following the windings of a path which was altogether new to him, when, hearing suddenly the distant murmur of a water-fall, he pursued it by his ear, till he beheld it descending, as if to meet him on his way.

He then proceeded forward, along the side of the stream, with the hope of tracing it to its source. It led him up a wild, and difficult ascent, of thick bushes, and tangled brakes, till, at last, he entirely lost sight of it in a gloomy wood, which he found it impossible to penetrate. He turned towards a more accessible part of the mountain, and, climbing to a still greater height, in a short time found himself in an open space, and on somewhat less uneven ground. He now halted, for the purpose of reconnoitring the situation of the country; but the close, and lofty

growth of the surrounding trees obstructed his view on every side.

In a few moments, he heard a slight rustling noise among the bushes behind, and, on looking round, he saw, with astonishment, what seemed to be a grey head, slowly advancing as from the earth. He watched it narrowly. It was, in truth, the head of a man, who was crawling on his hands, and knees, from out of a cavern in the side of the mountain. The head was then lifted up, and Frederick beheld two angry eyes immovably fixed upon him. Frederick was struck with surprise, and awe; but the emotion amounted not to fear.

At last, the man came forward, and wildly exclaimed,

"What! won't you let me die here quietly?—My wife died of a broken heart—and that was all your doing—nay, nay, that was not all, neither—there was"—and he seemed to be recollecting—"Yes, yes, yes—and there was worse still:—my daughter! my daughter! my daughter!—

Ah!—*there it was—and here it is now*”—clapping his forehead.

Frederick perceived that the unfortunate being was insane; and that he mistook him for some one who had injured him—he shuddered;—but, suppressing his feelings, said to him, with a calm voice, and manner—

“ Come, now, recollect yourself, my friend; it was not my fault—I never saw you before.”

He did not now appear to be thinking of him at all. In a moment after, however, he began again—

“ You look very kind, and pitiful—what a deed would you do if you would find my daughter for me!—but God knows whether she belongs to this world or—”

“ What was her name?”

“ Rose,” said he; “ and a sweet, sweet Rose she was—and she blushed like one—Oh villain, villain!”—

Frederick felt a tightness at his heart, as he listened to these incoherent, yet intelligible sentences.

"Come,—don't talk of it now;—tell me how you live in this wild place—where and how do you get food?"

The man did not appear to hear him; but Frederick saw a few tears dropping softly down his face. He let him weep in silence—and then repeated his question.—The poor creature, who had been agonized by the sight of Frederick, from the mistake he had made respecting his person—was now composed, and said—

"O I do very well—I go to that town"—pointing still farther on from that side of the country with which Frederick was acquainted.—"I give them money, and they give me food."—

"And where do you get money?"—

"I work;—I can work very well."—

Frederick observed that he had some bags hanging round his waist.

"Do you keep your money in those bags?"—

"No, no, no, nothing—but I believe they think I do—I have heard them talking about me."—

"How long have you lived here?"

"A great, great, many years—I dug that place myself, after my wife died, and my daughter went—there there! don't ask me any more questions, young gentleman."—

"May I come and visit you again—and bring you any thing?"—

"Now that's very kind!—but won't *you* use me ill too?—No—you *can't now*:—aye, come and see me; but I don't want any thing:—you had better go home now—it will be dark soon."

Frederick bade him good night, and had just left him, when he heard him cry out for help. He ran back, and beheld him on his knees,—and a stout man standing over him with a visage

"Fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils."

He had knocked him down, and had now raised a tremendous bludgeon to repeat the blow, when Frederick, whom he, fortunately, had not seen, darted upon him, and

with a sudden twist, wrung it from his hand ; saying—

“ What Devil sent thee to destroy that helpless old man ?”

The villain now turned on Frederick, who had retreated a few steps, and who, with a strength and resolution which the wretch had not expected from the youthfulness of his appearance, kept him off with the cudgel—but he still approached towards Frederick,—and, had drawn from his pocket, in gloomy silence, a large clasped knife, which, having opened it, he was proceeding to level deliberately at the head of his young antagonist.

Frederick, however, a few seconds before, had heard the deep mouth of Tiger in the woods—

“ Tiger, Tiger,”—cried he, aloud—and, presently, saw him coming up behind the villain at full speed.

“ Seize him, Tiger !”—and in a moment the arm now raised to dart the knife, was in his jaws. The wretch roared with agony, and dropped the weapon; Frederick

hastily took it up from the ground, closed, and put it into his pocket.

Tiger, in the mean time, had fastened on the throat of his victim. Frederick vehemently called him off; but he, now far too much enraged to obey the voice of any but his master, tore down the ruffian to the earth, and, in one instant he was dead.

The piercing cry of murder from the old man had drawn another person to the spot, who, however, did not arrive till the precise moment when Frederick had left the dead body, and, with the club still in his hand, was returning towards the cave. The unknown person flew up to Frederick, and seizing him by the collar, exclaimed,—

“ Did you, young Sir! attempt to murder that old man ?”

“ Take care, Sir, if you touch me, my dog will certainly destroy you. I could not prevent him from strangling that miserable wretch (pointing to the dead body) who would have murdered me, after I had rescued this poor man from his hands.”

The old man cried out,—

“ Away away!—don’t hurt *him*! he beat off the black fellow!”

On hearing this, the young man suddenly fell on his knees before Frederick,—then rose hastily, and vanished.

Frederick enquired of the old man how he felt himself?

“ Bruised—bruised bad enough here”—pointing to his head—“ but no matter—only help me into my cave, and then go home—it will be dark in the woods.”

“ There will be a moon presently,” said Frederick.

“ Good night!” said the poor man, in a voice that came in hollow murmurs from within the cave:—“ make haste—make haste—go home.”

Frederick now called Tiger; and was proceeding through the wood, when the young man who had seized him by the collar, suddenly rushed out again.

Frederick was preparing for another attack, when the stranger surprised him by saying,

" Forgive me, young gentleman; for that hateful mistake.—Heaven bless you! —but, Sir—I joined you again, to entreat that I might attend you on your way homeward: there may be more of these villains, and some evil may yet befall you to-night."

" I thank you, Sir, and shall be glad of your company; but, what will become of yourself, when you have accompanied me towards *my* home?—Will you not, then, be very far from your own?"

" Yes,—*very* far!" said the stranger, in a low gloomy voice—but, never mind me. I know every path, and avenue among these mountains, well;—and, besides—a little don't frighten me;”—and he half laughed, with an expression that was utterly indefinable. They passed through the woods, and the moon had now risen. By its bright light, Frederick caught a glimpse of the stranger, and observed something in the cast of his countenance, which, to have seen once, was to remember for ever. He bore a commanding brow, and was rather

what is called handsome than otherwise ; but his look was beyond description mournful. They walked on quickly, with Tiger close beside them. At last, about the hour of eleven, they met Mr. Melcombe, proceeding from the village, (yet without at all knowing what course to take,) in search of Frederick, and evidently in great perturbation and alarm.

" Frederick," cried he, " how rejoiced I am to see you !—Where can you have been ?—You are so adventurous in your rambles among these rocks and precipices, that I am often apprehensive for your safety, and have this night had such an overpowering dread upon the subject, that, some hours ago, I gave Tiger the scent of one of your gloves, and turned him out to find you, and most thankful am I for the event of the experiment."

" You have far more cause for thankfulness, Sir," said Frederick, " than you can possibly imagine ;—you and he together, my dear Sir, have saved my life—

strange, very strange things I have to tell you."

" But you have a companion, Frederick."—

" Yes, Sir ; a gentleman I met in the wood ; who, after the accidents which I have to relate to you, kindly insisted on guarding me home."

" And now," said the stranger, " that I hope you are safe; I will wish you a good night."

" But, Sir," said Mr. Melcombe, " you must be far out of your way ; let me prevail on you to rest under our roof until the morning. I owe you every thing for your care of my friend."—

He resisted for some time; but they joined their entreaties, and he was overcome.

Mr. Melcombe ordered supper. The stranger ate little, and spoke less: his mind was abstracted—his answers were abrupt, and frequently foreign from the purpose.

The whole party were under a painful embarrassment ; and the stranger propos-

ing to retire, Frederick attended him to his chamber, and returned to the supper-room.

Mr. Melcombe could not sleep till he had heard the full relation of Frederick's adventures.—They filled him with horror.—He determined to accompany his young friend the next morning on a visit to the old man, to unite his own efforts with those of Frederick, in an endeavour to allure him from his miserable dwelling, and force on his acceptance a few of the comforts of life. Mr. Melcombe was also anxious to obtain from him some farther particulars of his former history;—but Frederick assured him that in this they should not succeed, and that the attempt would only distress him to no purpose.

They now parted for the night.—Frederick's chamber was contiguous to that of the stranger. The mind of the former being too much occupied by his late adventures to suffer him to sleep, he heard from the adjoining room repeated groans, and, now and then, a few incoherent words;—

but he could only distinguish that they were of a melancholy import, and uttered in broken sentences. As soon as he arose in the morning, he went immediately to the apartment of the stranger, for the purpose of offering him such accommodations as he might require. He knocked at the door :—receiving no answer, he advanced into the room ;—but its tenant had disappeared.

CHAP. XIV.

WHEN Frederick communicated to Mr. Melcombe the departure of the mysterious stranger, and the sounds which he had heard from his chamber in the night, they both vainly wearied themselves with conjectures respecting his conduct, deportment, and appearance. The servants were questioned whether any of them had seen him leave the house.—They had not.—After a hasty breakfast, Mr. Melcombe

and Frederick set forward to the cave, with Tiger of their party ; Mr. Melcombe caressing him with more fondness than ever, and wishing to make him comprehend his gratitude, and increased affection, for his late faithful and important services.

On their approach to the cave, they heard, and presently afterwards, saw, the unfortunate old man raving at the mouth of it.—His hands, which he was wildly dashing against its rocky sides, were covered with fresh blood, in addition to that which had streamed from his recent wound, and which had now congealed on his grey hairs. Fever burnt in his cheeks,—and they perceived that the blow of the ruffian had entirely destroyed his small remains of reason. He did not, however, attempt to hurt them, but was silent for a few minutes : looking earnestly at Frederick, as if he had some confused recollection of having seen him before. Again he raved—but no longer, as on the preceding night, appeared to have method in his madness.

The growlings of Tiger now drew their

attention, and they perceived that he was smelling over the dead body :—Mr. Melcombe called him away from the spot; ^{and} observing to Frederick that it would be fruitless to prolong their visit to the unhappy maniac, who was no longer capable of understanding them, proposed that they should apply immediately to the magistrates, informing them of all the circumstances that had occurred, and explain that the destruction of the robber had been inevitably drawn down upon himself. This plan they executed without delay; and Frederick gave up the knife, and the club, together with the dismal details which belonged to them. Mr. Melcombe, at the same time, recommended the case of the wretched old man to their immediate consideration; and paid a circular visit to the principal families in the neighbourhood, to solicit subscriptions for the purpose of placing him under such care as might afford him the best hope of restoration to reason.

In a short time, every thing was done

that could be done. The ruffian had been a man in the most infamous repute; and had often been heard to mention his suspicions that old Woodland had money about him. These circumstances, combined with the evidence of Frederick, were sufficient.—The body was examined, and interred. The old man, who, on a nearer view, appeared to have derived his furrows, and his grey hairs, still more from sorrow than from time, was removed to a proper situation; where he received every medical aid, and every decent accommodation, which his unhappy circumstances admitted and required.

When all these arrangements were concluded, Mr. Melcombe and his pupil repaired with lighter hearts to Mrs. Villiers and Helena, and gave them the whole account, which we have here detailed. Great was their horror,—great their pity;—but yet greater their joy at the miraculous rescue of their dear Frederick.

Tiger was still in attendance; and Helena, who had been very pale during the relation, no sooner heard of *his* part in the

terrifying scene, than she clasped him round the shaggy neck, and hid her cheek, now flushed with pleasure, upon his head. Delighted with her notice, he flew, he leaped, he gainballed about her ; rested his vast paws upon her shoulders, and even dared to lick her face.—

“ No no, friend Tiger,” cried Frederick, suddenly pulling him down—“ *I can not suffer that.*”

Helena, however, complained of this interference ; for Tiger was now become, in her eye, a personage of infinitely too much consideration to be thwarted in any of his proceedings : happily, he was also a character of great *good sense* ; and seldom needed either correction, or instruction :—with which just eulogium we shall conclude this chapter.

CHAP. XV.

AFTER these signal events, the pursuits and amusements of our little party flowed on in their accustomed course. Nothing further occurred of disturbance, or alarm ; and Frederick was satisfied, that, without a fable, time had wings.

When the period of his departure drew near, Mr. Melcombe informed him of his own intention to accompany him to Oxford, for the purpose of introducing him to a few of his most particular friends, at Christ-Church,—where he would remain with him for a few days, till he should have shaken off the awkward feelings of a freshman. Frederick was duly grateful for this kindness, which afforded every possible alleviation to his loss of the only society in which he truly delighted.

Mr. Melcombe solicited a neighbouring clergyman to relieve him from the duty of

his church for one Sunday. The Rev. Doctor readily undertook that either himself or his curate should, without fail, attend—adding, in a voice that seemed to have taken it's Doctor's degree when he had done so himself—

“ It is singular, my dear Sir, that I was in the full intentions of waiting on you to-morrow morning, for the express purpose of asking the same indulgence from you, for the afternoon *service*, on Sunday next, which day, as I am made to understand, will precede your projected departure for Oxford. If, Mr. Melcombe, you *could* make it accord with your convenience thus to accommodate me, I shall be deeply sensible of the obligation; as it so chances that both my curate and myself have pressing calls from home, at the same juncture; I being under the indispensable necessity of dining with the Bishop of B——, and my curate having preferred a petition which I have put myself to considerable inconvenience in acceding to—videlicet—that I would suffer him to enter on his progress

towards London,—for the advantage of stationing his eldest son at a charity-school. His journey thither must be performed on foot ; he is therefore necessitated to set out immediately after morning *service*, to the end that he may be punctual in his return home on the Saturday ensuing."

The generous heart of Mr. Melcombe was wounded by this account ; though the contrasted circumstances which it contained, were apparently stated altogether as matter of course ; but not being on a footing of intimacy with Dr. Pomfret (so the reverend gentleman was called), he was silent ;—and, after a short pause, promised his assistance, which, in the present circumstances, he felt that he was not at liberty to refuse, although his compliance would oblige him to omit his own second service :—to this, however, as the case was urgent, and, as he had never permitted himself to do so in any former instance, he now consented.

Their mutual arrangements being thus made, Mr. Melcombe took his leave of this

dignified pastor, and proceeded immediately to the house of the curate.

He found him digging in his garden ; with two little boys beside him, who were very busily employed in raking, and carrying away the weeds. Three blowsy girls came running out of the house at the sound of the horses' feet ;—and, through the open doors, he perceived, in a little kitchen behind, the mother of the family, in a stuff gown, and a clean check apron, kneading her own bread. At this unexpected visit, Mr. Morgan threw down his spade, accompanied his guest into the house, and, apologizing for his gardener's dress, and dirty hands, requested him to be seated, and to speak his commands ; pressing him at the same time, to accept of such refreshment as he had to offer. He had “plenty of eggs,” he said, “and some *rare* cheese and bread, both of his good wife's own making.”

Mr. Melcombe, who was of very dignified stature, was obliged to stoop as he entered this neat, but very humble cottage.

He communicated to Mr. Morgan all that was necessary of what had passed between himself and Dr. Pomfret; promised to attend the church of ~~St. Paul's~~ on the approaching Sunday afternoon; and added, that, hearing of his intended journey to London, he had taken the liberty of calling to request that he would oblige him by executing a commission for him on his arrival.

Poor Mr. Morgan, who had been accustomed to the commands of Dr. Pomfret, was almost overcome by the gentle courtesy of Mr. Melcombe, which he was the less able to understand, as he could not help being of opinion that Mr. Melcombe had much more the appearance of a man of consequence than Dr. Pomfret himself.

"Aye, and he's fifty times *handsomer*" (said Mrs. Morgan afterwards) "by the glimpse I had of him."

"It is 'the beauty of holiness,'"—said Mr. Morgan. "Mr. Melcombe is known all round the country for his piety, and his charity.—I once heard him preach,—and I shall never forget it."

But,—to return to the interview where we left it;—Mr. Morgan not only promised to do any thing in his power to oblige Mr. Melcombe, but told him that he ~~should~~ be really a happy man could he be, in any way, able to serve him. Mr. Melcombe then said that he was desirous of purchasing some certain books (naming them,) and that the order being rather a large one, he would request the favour of him to apply to the bookseller for them in person.—He then wrote down a list of books, &c. and, presenting to Mr. Morgan a note for twenty pounds, further requested him to pay for them, which, he “believed, that sum would be more than sufficient to do.” Mr. Morgan most readily undertook for every thing: and now, Mr. Melcombe, wishing him a good morning, rode away.

The following day he wrote thus:

To the Rev. — MORGAN.

“ REV. SIR,

“ I have two favours to solicit of you, which, as you will find, are intended to supersede the troublesome commission you

so kindly took upon yourself yesterday morning.

" The first is, that you will not mention to any but your ' good wife ' the liberty I am about to take :—the second, that you will indulge me by appropriating to your own accommodation on your journey, the trifling sum which I yesterday left in your hands.

" I was truly distressed at hearing that you were to perform that journey on foot ; and this, too, in a space of time in which I should suppose it scarcely possible to accomplish it ; but, not having the pleasure of your acquaintance, I could think of no method of disguising the liberty I have presumed to take, but by the fraud of which I have been guilty, and which I hope you will account, if not a pious, at least an innocent one.

" With best wishes for a continuance of your domestic happiness, and an increase of your prosperity, I remain

" Your obliged humble servant,

" MORDAUNT MELCOMBE."

This letter Mr. Melcombe sent by a servant, with express orders to deliver it with his own hands into those of Mr. or Mrs. Morgan, and—"on no account to wait for an answer."

Mr. Melcombe congratulated himself on his ingenuity in having provided himself with so happy an escape from the acknowledgments of Mr. Morgan ;—but, the servant, instead of listening to his master, had been thinking of the journey to Oxford, for which he had that very morning been informed that his attendance would be required. That *he* should take in two ideas at once, was not to be supposed ; especially when one of them was interesting to his own amusement.—In short, his mind,—or whatever that should be called which imparted animal life to his body, reported to him, like an echo, only the *last* words—and he returned triumphantly from Mr. Morgan, with a letter in his hand.

"Whence comes that?" asked Mr. Melcombe.

"From Mr. Morgan, Sir"—bowing.

" I waited for an answer, as you ordered me."

Mr. Melcombe's face was crimson.

" Your orders were, *not* to wait for an answer, Sir."

" Sir, I beg pardon—I am sure I—understood you, Sir—"

" Blockhead!"

The man, who had lived with his master ten years, and never once had seen him really angry before, for a few moments stood aghast;—and then, hastening into the kitchen, began to tell his story, and vent his amazement, and dismay. " He could not think," he said, " what was come over his master,—for he was generally anxious enough for answers to his letters, and what the sin could be of bringing one now he, for his part, should never be able to make out."

As he certainly would not have comprehended it a whit better if it had been fully explained to him, there was not a chance left that he should ever recover from his perplexity. All he could *guess* was, that

"summat had sartainly put his master out of humour"—in which faith we must leave him, and attend to Mr. Morgan's letter.

"REV. AND HONOURED SIR,

"It is not in my poor power to tell you how much I feel the extraordinary generosity and goodness of your proceeding. My poor wife is crying with joy, and gratitude, as she was yesterday with grief, to think of the sad long journey my poor little boy and I must have had on foot; for it was out of my power to pay for two places in the coach, and we have lived entirely upon bread and potatoes for a fortnight, to save money enough to pay my way back on the outside;—without which, as you observe, Sir, it would have been impossible for me to have got home by Saturday night. My curacy is thirty pounds a year, and it is all I have for my whole family,—therefore you may think, Sir, how rich your noble bounty has made us. I shall contrive to spare enough of it from my journey to give my little boy a good suit

of clothes to go to school in, and hope to bring home some trifle for my wife. But, not to presume upon your kindness, most worthy Sir, with fervent prayers for your happiness, I remain

“ Your ever thankful

“ Humble servant,

“ J. MORGAN.”

Mr. Melcombe's benevolent heart was so deeply interested by the various feelings this letter excited, that he forgot his anger, and sat, for a long time, ruminating on the hard lot of this respectable man, and considering what measures could be taken for his effectual relief.

“ Something *must* be done!”—said he aloud, and rising from his arm-chair.—The door was half open—Frederick just then entered, and caught the words.

“ This is some concern about which you are very anxious, Sir, I am sure. Can *I* do any thing?”

“ Not yet, my dear boy—but, we shall see hereafter.”

CHAP. XVI.

WHEN Sunday came—the last day of Frederick's happy holiday, and that on which the whole party were, by agreement, to dine, and finish the day together ; they all assembled at church. Frederick met Mrs. Villiers at the door, and begged for admission into her pew.

Mr. Melcombe now entered,—and desired the clerk to give notice that “ there would be no evening service, as he was going to *officiate* in the next parish.” This clerk was not celebrated for the quickness of his hearing ; nor were the ears of his mind at all more acute than those of his body : nor was this all. Mr. Melcombe had often endeavoured to improve his pronunciation of the church service, by explaining to him the meaning of certain phrases, and sentences, which he was, unfortunately, in the habit of confounding,—but, in vain. On this unlucky day,— in reading the

Psalms, he gave the following account of King David's calamities :

" I am ----- *a lion* unto my mother's children."

Our young ones were not in high spirits, and stood this tolerably well ; but, what became of them,—and even of the sedate Mrs. Villiers ;—and, above all, what became of Mr. Melcombe, when the clerk, in an audible voice, pronounced, more distinctly than was his wont to do,—

" I give ye notiz—there won't be no sarvice this afternoon, as the parson is going *a fishing* in the next parish!"

Mr. Melcombe sat down,—and gasped for breath. Mrs. Villiers suffered for him, —so much, that her inclination to smile was entirely subdued ;—but Frederick and Helena, having involuntarily exchanged a glance, —neither Mr. Melcombe's supposed feelings, nor Mrs. Villiers's reproving looks,—neither their own regret at parting, nor even the sacredness of the place, could preserve them from the fatal con-

tagion of mischief, which was caught by each from the eye of the other.

A suppressed titter was heard through the congregation, which did not assist their self-command : all that they could do was to prevent their mirth from becoming audible ; and the whole party retired from the church as soon as possible.

Mr. Melcombe retreated into the vestry, and was so deeply hurt at the perverse mistake of his clerk, that he addressed the unconscious offender with more severity than was usual with him. He then repeated, as distinctly as possible, the words which he ought to have delivered, and desired him to hasten into the church-yard, and rectify his error, before the congregation should have dispersed.

Frederick, in the mean time, had recovered his composure, and, addressing himself to those who he saw were departing without the explanation, informed them of the real state of the case. He then waited for Mr. Melcombe, and acquainted him

with what he had done. When all this was adjusted, they followed Mrs. Villiers and Helena, and found them just arrived.

Helena was beginning to recover her gravity, when the sight of Mr. Melcombe, who entered hiding his face with his hands, threw her into a new convulsion,—by no means quieted by the ruefully ridiculous conflict of smiles and frowns which was displayed in his countenance, when he suffered it to be seen.

At last, she found breath to say—

“ Now *do*, my dear Mr. Melcombe, get that poor old man out of the church, if you wish me to behave there as I ought.”

“ Well ! but what can I do with him, Helena ?—If I get him out of the church, as you call it, I don’t know where else to place him ; and *you* would not have him starve I am sure.”

“ No, Sir, not for the world ; but suppose you send him to me to learn to read, and then his unaccountable blunders will be quite a treat to me, for I will make him

read comical stories, and tell him I am laughing at *them*."

" By the way, Helena, how does your little gipsy pupil go on?—I have not heard you speak of her for some time."

" What, Marian?—O charmingly, Sir. She is the best little thing in all the world: but she is thirteen, now, Sir, and works beautifully, and dresses me, and does a hundred things; and as to reading, I only wish the old clerk could read half as well."

" She does you great credit indeed, my dear," said Mrs. Villiers.

Frederick gave Helena such a speaking look as rewarded her charity with a glow of pleasure.

" I wish I knew where her poor mother is!" said Helena.

" Poor, poor thing!"—said Mrs. Villiers; " there is no thinking of *her* without a heart-ache."

" Well!" said Mr. Melcombe, taking out his watch, " I must go home for half an hour, before I set off for this *fishing*

party which old William has provided for me."

"Shall I ride with you, Sir?" asked Frederick—very faintly.

"What! the last day?"—said Mr. Melcombe, smiling—"no, Frederick;"—and went away alone.

He returned sooner than he was expected, and all partook of a social and friendly dinner,—followed by as pleasant an evening as it was possible that the *last* could be:—but—ten o'clock would come—and, the next morning, the tutor and pupil were to be in the chaise by six. Mr. Melcombe had still some arrangements to make at home, before his fortnight's absence, and proposed that they should take leave like *heroes*,—and go at once.

"And so you have no desire to know what becomes of us,"—said he to Mrs. Villiers, while 'more last words' were exchanging between the young ones.

"And why," she asked, "must that be supposed?"

“ Because you do not tell me that I may write to you.”

“ Nor can you, surely, be required to be told that I shall be pleased to hear from you.”

“ Is that true? then will I write, till I fear you will be tired of reading.—But one word more:—will you answer?”

“ I will.”

He pressed her hand in fervent acknowledgment.

“ Now, Frederick!” said he—and away they went.

CHAP. XVII.

HELENA had not heard the arrangement respecting letters, and one morning, as she sat at work, with her mother, began to—"wonder whether they were safe at Oxford—whether they were very happy there—and whether they should ever hear of them before Mr. Melcombe came back."

"Why, yes, Helena—I think we shall: Mr. Melcombe said he would write, and let us know what they were about."

"Did he, Mamma?—Is John gone to the post?"—

"O yes! long ago:—I think he is returned; for I heard the gate bell; and somebody went by on horseback a moment ago."

Helena looked towards the door, and at her work, alternately.—

"No, Mamma;—nobody comes.—

Here John entered with letters—One of them was from Oxford—for Mrs. Villiers, and from Mr. Melcombe. Mrs. Villiers read to herself:—

“ Oxford, Wednesday Morning.

“ **MY DEAREST FRIEND,**

“ We are here: that is, all the material, and worthless part of us: as for our hearts, they are just where they were last Sunday. We had a very good sort of a journey; that is, we had beds, and food, and no accidents.

“ I cannot boast that it was a lively journey, nor do I think that all the wit we both uttered during the whole two days, would fill,—no,—not *your* thimble. But though not ‘merry,’ I was obliged to be ‘wise’—and I preached, as in duty bound, about prudence, and caution, particularly in avoiding the temptations of gambling, conviviality, &c. I am not very apprehensive that Frederick will fall deeply into any of these errors; but I was rather earnest

he is more vulnerable. You will understand me, when I tell you, I very seriously warned him not to let his *heart* steal away from him too soon.—

‘ And may he better reck the rede,
Than ever did the *adviser*.’—

“ Thus far I wrote an hour ago, and have been in a profound reverie ever since.—

“ I was going to tell you that I have introduced Frederick to two of my old *Co-mates*, and am sure they will keep an eye upon him for my sake ; but, the truth is, that persons removed so far above him, by age, and situation, will no otherwise be able to benefit him, in this way, than by a friendly hint at his danger, should they chance to hear of any impropriety. By far the most essential point, is the selection of his acquaintance, from among those of his own age, and standing. On this, I shall furnish him with my best advice, and as far as I can regulate it, I will.

“ And now, my dear friend, how is my sweet Helena ? well ? and merry ?—If so,

I am satisfied ; well knowing that in every respect besides, she is all that makes you happy. But, above every other anxiety, how are *you*? These questions, you know, require an answer. You do not, I am sure, forget your promise. I shall calculate exactly in how many hours I may have a confirmation of this my confidence.

“ I am interupted—and, sooner than I intended, must bid you adieu !”

Second Letter, in Continuation.

“ *Eleven at Night.*

“ This evening, after dining with Dr. ——, we all adjourned to Christ Church walk, which I was anxious to shew Frederick myself, as all here is alike new to him, and this is certainly one of the most striking objects in the university. We parted from our host, as soon as civility would permit. I then led Frederick to my old and favourite haunt, the little quiet garden of Merton. He was *properly* delighted with it. The world was assembled in Christ

shades, almost by ourselves. We entered on a long and interesting discussion of his plans, and prospects. On this, as with me, indeed, on all occasions, he displayed a most winning docility of disposition ; I also every day, receive the most gratifying convictions of the purity, the uprightness, and the manliness of his mind. Were he my son, I could not love him better than I do. To-morrow I shall unveil to him all the wonders of this classical abode. We shall go entirely unaccompanied, for I would mark the early workings of his taste, and intellect, while some of the noblest efforts of art, and genius, are submitted to his contemplation, for the first time. Good night my dearest friend !—God and good angels guard you !”

“ *Thursday Evening.*

“ We spent the whole day in executing my projects of last night.

“ Frederick was interested and gratified to the utmost of my wishes. To me, there was nothing new, but a few of the last

improvements in New College Chapel ; of the beauties of which I will endeavour to convey to you such ideas as words can give, when I am so happy as to converse with you once more. Frederick begins to count my few remaining days with regret. I have established him in very comfortable rooms, and he has already found out a few of his Eton friends ; but he flatters me by saying, that they will not console him for my departure. I tell him I cannot go to school any more, and, that he must content himself with his young friends, and his new studies, for some time to come. I do not choose to communicate to him, just now, that I have received a letter from Mr. Beaumont, acquainting me with his wish that Frederick should spend the next summer in travelling over England,—and the following in a tour through Scotland. The ensuing Christmas, he is to pass at the house of the gentleman whom he visited last year. At the present moment, it would be a real affliction to him to know that he is not to return to Monmouthshire

in the next Christmas vacation. He this moment enters; and charges me with his respects,—his remembrances, his love, his every thing, to you and Helena,—hoping that you each think of him with as much constancy and warmth, as I am his voucher that he does of you.

“I will not say any thing for him, that I cannot say for myself,—so take all that is affectionate from us both, and divide it between you.

“MORDAUNT MELCOMBE.

“FREDERICK BEAUMONT.”

Only the first of these letters, however, being received on the day above mentioned; and Mrs. Villiers having deposited it in her pocket, merely saying, “they are quite well,” Helena was not satisfied.—

“Mr. Melcombe does not send his love to me, Mamma?” in a tone of interrogation.

“O yes—he does—say something to you, Helena;—where is it?”—

Mrs. Villiers had felt so strongly im-

pressed with the idea that much of this letter was not intended for Helena's ear, as to forget that it contained any thing which was. She, however, examined it again and read the conclusion.

"Not a word from Frederick"—thought, but said not, Helena. The next day made up the deficiency, and the latter part of the second letter was read to Helena, without any omission.

"Frederick has *not* forgotten me, then"—said she internally—and in the evening she watered the rose-tree which he had lately planted for her.

*Letter from Mrs. VILLIERS to Mr.
MELCOMBE.*

"Let me thank you, twice over, for your two letters. Sincerely did we both rejoice at your prosperous arrival at Oxford, with our friend Beaumont. I have ever felt a powerful interest in all that relates to those happy haunts of the severer, as well as the more elegant muses, and long have I

wished to visit the schools, the temples, and the groves, in which they dwell. Frederick's youthful, and enthusiastick mind, will, I doubt not, soon yield itself, with ardour, to new studies, new companions, and new habitudes of life. His destination for next Christmas, I can truly say, is a disappointment to me, as, I doubt not, it will prove to my companion ; but, as yet, I have not mentioned it to her. She is, at present, amusing herself with conjuring up to her imagination the philosophic air and countenance which she supposes he will contract, from his new character of a college student. She is prepared with a due reverence for his acquisitions in the way of wisdom, and says she shall now be afraid to order him to work for her in the garden, and almost to talk nonsense to him ; which I believe would be the greater calamity of the two.

" Had she opportunity of observing the manners of most of his fellow-collegians, however, I suspect, from some few specimens I have seen, and from what I have heard

from you, that her apprehensions would considerably abate: and I much doubt whether many of his companions will either infect him with the awful formality of their manners, or allure him by their example to impair his spirits, or his health, by consuming his nights, or even his mornings, in learned solitude.

" *Our studies*,—that I may properly impress you with the dignity of our pursuits,—go on as usual. History, poetry, and musick, have each their turn, and delightfully relieve our domestic, and less elevated employments. Helena begins to think you have been a long time absent, but says—

" ' I will not wish for Mr. Melcombe's return, because poor Frederick will feel ' so deserted when he comes away.' She desires her kindest respects to you—

" ' And what to Frederick ?' say I—
" O ! thank him for his messages,
" Mamma, and remember me to him.'

" I know not how she has discovered that she is not now to send her love to him : I

have never told her so. We are both well ;—and so is Tiger, who met and joined us, on our walk yesterday evening.—His close attendance encouraged us to prolong our ramble, and we returned home by star-light. And now, my dear Sir, to end this endless trifling, and leave you to the wisdom of the Doctors, I will only say, that you have our truest wishes for your safe and speedy return : and,—desiring you will give *my* love to Frederick, subscribe myself

“ Your very sincere and faithful friend,
“ M. V.”

From Mr. MELCOMBE.

“ A thousand, thousand thanks, my dearest friend, for your precious letter ! I hasten to answer it in person. To-morrow I depart ; and as these are poor Frederick’s last hours, I will not, as I am so soon to be with you, cheat him even of one.

“ This is merely to let you know, that your letter is safe in my hands, though

that detestable Monmouth post delayed it one day. I hope to be at home on Saturday, in time to pay my respects to you in the evening. Frederick is well, and unites in all kind things to yourself and Helena—with

“Your’s for ever,

“M. M.”

“I am quite *gratified* by what you say of Tiger. His watchful care of you has raised him higher in my love and *esteem* than ever.”—

CHAP. XVIII.

It was late on Saturday evening when Mr. Melcombe arrived : yet, as soon afterwards as possible, he appeared at Mrs. Villiers’s gate, and was welcomed with smiles of kindness, and many enquiries after the companion he had left behind.

"He is perfectly well,"—said Mr. Melcombe, "and sent you both a thousand affectionate greetings, and his last words were, 'I shall never enjoy life till I am at — again.' He will do very well after a little while. The ambitions and emulations of an university life will soon rouse his activity, and absorb his mind."

Helena looked a little grave.

"I suppose they will," thought she.—After some further conversation, on whatever was most interesting to themselves,—

"Well," said Mr. Melcombe,—“whom had you on Sunday?”

"O, the great Dr. Pomfret!" cried Helena, whose mischief awoke at the question—"now, pray, Mainma, do let me tell Mr. Melcombe.—First of all, he made us wait half an hour;—then he strutted up the middle aisle, with his huge wig full of wisdom, and all his wings out—so like a turkey-cock!—was not it, Mamma?"—

"For shame, Helena!"—but Mrs. Villiers could not deny it, nor avoid laughing.

"Well then! he was like a *man*,—

meant by nature to be very tall, only he grew out at the sides.—Then, he read the service—*very fine*—and solemn—not a bit like *you!*!”—

“ Thank you, Helena!—very fine and solemn, and not a bit like me:—well?”

“ Psha! now you know what I mean:—so then,—at last he got into the pulpit.—I do think I could imitate his voice, but I know I mustn’t;”—and she looked at Mamma—

“ No, certainly not.”

“ Well! then: he looked bigger than ever:—but, the worst was, now really and seriously, that he”—and she paused, “ did not *preach* like you neither, for he told us very tremendous things, did he not, Mamma?”

“ Poor Helena!—so he frightened you out of your little wits!”—

“ No Sir, that I can’t say—*You* have taught me better than that.”

She said this, with so innocent an air, and in such an insinuating tone of voice, that Mr. Melcombe was marvellously pleased; and told her he was proud

of her approbation, but very sorry that Dr. Pomfret had proved so little satisfactory to her—adding,

“ I hope I shall not soon leave you again to *any* substitute whatever.”

Helena was delighted to hear this—

“ And”—said she, “ Mamma and I have a great deal for you to do.”

“ Have you indeed?—I am glad to hear it—what is it, Helena?”

“ Why, first of all”—pointing on her left hand, with the fore finger of the right—“ there is—Anacharsis for you to read to us;—then, there is, to ride with me.”

“ Very pretty!” said Mrs. Villiers; “ you are laying out Mr. Melcombe’s time finely.”

“ Go on, Helena”—said he.

“ Then there is to teach Mamma and me Italian.”

“ Be quiet, Helena,” said Mrs. Villiers—“ that’s a contrivance of the moment, for I am sure I never thought of such a proposal; nor, I believe, did you, ‘till this instant.”

"I am very glad she has thought of it now," said Mr. Melcombe—"and mind, I shall come on Monday morning to be instated in all my honours. And now, I must depart: I believe it is late, and I have not yet spoken to any body at home,—Tiger only excepted, and he, you know, is not a character to be slighted."

"My love to him, dear creature!" said Helena.—"Good night, Mr. Melcombe—I am so glad you are come home!"—and she put her pretty white hands into his, saying,

"We shall see you at church to-morrow."

He begged for Mamma's hand also, and pressing it, together with her daughter's, between his own, reluctantly took his leave.

CHAP. XIX.

ON Monday, Mr. Melcombe was punctual to his engagements and they had a delightful morning of reading and conversation :—neither was the Italian forgotten,—but, some days afterwards, he commenced, and whenever he was permitted, continued his instructions in that language to both mother and daughter. They improved as scholars usually do under an excellent master, and where there prevails a reciprocal delight in teaching and being taught.

“ That’s a very pretty purse that you are netting”—said Mr. Melcombe to Mrs. Villiers, one morning, when he had done reading ;—“ I wonder whether any body would have the charity to net me such an one ! look at this !”—

And he drew out one in such a state of decay, that a guinea fell out on the table.

" You shall have *this*, if you believe well"—said Mrs. Villiers.

" Shall I indeed?—that ready promise is more than charity—it is kindness."

" Can't you make it to shut and not to open, Mamma?" said Helena.

" That would be a new construction of purse, Helena"—said Mrs. Villiers laughing—" but what may be your fancy for recommending it?"

" Because then he could not spend all his money."

" What, am I so *very* extravagant, Helena?"

" Yes—*very* :—and *you* know well enough in what way, and so do a great many other people."

Mr. Melcombe coloured—and Helena, stroking his hand which lay on the table, told him he was a "slee paukie thief;" but he must not expect that he was never to be found out.

He began to fear that the transaction with Mr. Morgan had transpired. Of this, however, Helena had not heard; but

she knew so many of his benevolences that she intended only a general allusion to them.

Mr. Melcombe, by way of turning the conversation, asked Helena when she would ride with him.

"O to-morrow, if you please Sir, should it be riding weather."

The day proved remarkably fine, and they had a delightful ride, which led them, as it happened, near the wood through which Mr. Melcombe had passed on his visit to the poor old man in the cave. He pointed it out to his companion,—and the conversation naturally fell on the unhappy incidents that had there occurred. Helena enquired into the present situation of the poor maniac, and was anxious to know whether there was any chance of his recovery.

"Nowe whatever, I fear;"—said Mr. Melcombe—"it is a shocking subject—and I have therefore avoided the mention of it."

“Poor creature!”—sighed Helexia—
“what a dreading fate!”

Mr. Melcombe changed the subject—talked of the views—of the changing leaves, (for it was then Autumn,) and lastly of Frederick.

“I dare say he will like Oxford very well,” said Helena—“but he will be glad when Christmas comes.”

“I am not sure of that. I do not think he will be very fond of Bath.”—

“Bath!”

“Has not Mrs. Villiers yet mentioned that his father wishes him to spend the Christmas vacation with Lord —?”

“No, Sir, never:—what! and not come here at all?”

“No, Helena—nor the following summer; for then he is to travel over England: this, however, I have not yet confessed to him; though I must do so very shortly.”

Nor did Mr. Melcombe now tell Helena that *two summers* were to be taken up in travelling, and in absence.

'Helena was so long silent after the intelligence he *had* communicated, that he looked round to address her again :—at the same moment, he saw a tear drop on the hand that held the bridle—and—said nothing.

*H*e began to muse in his turn,—and, during the remainder of the ride, the conversation very much resembled an effort to shoot an arrow from an ill-strung bow. When they reached Mrs. Villiers's, Helena walked up stairs into her own apartment, —Mr. Melcombe into Mrs. Villiers's dressing-room. He told her what had passed on the subject of Frederick ; and a long conversation followed on the too tender interest which they feared was involving the hearts of the young people.

" I am at a loss"—said Mr. Melcombe.—" in what manner to act ;—unacquainted as I am with Mr. Beaumont's views with regard to his son :—yet, to warn Frederick, more openly than I have done, against the danger of loving Helena, may do mis-

chief, by fixing his attention upon her more closely than ever."

"That is precisely my apprehension respecting her,"—said Mrs. Villiers.

"Then, to banish him from my house, is impossible: it is his home,—so appointed by his father."

"I shall be miserable"—said Mrs. Villiers—"if my Helena's heart should be lured to its disappointment. Something, perhaps, may be hoped from the long absence now commencing; and, in the mean time, we may consider what can be done before they meet again."

They concluded by agreeing that nothing more should be said to Helena, at present, unless she should introduce the subject of herself. She had no gaiety all that day,—no—nor the next morning: no pretty mischiefs lurked in her smile; for, truth to say, no smile was to be seen. At last, said Mrs. Villiers, as they were sitting at work,

"Come, my dear Rose, my sweet Rose, be merry!"—Helena burst into tears.—

"My dearest girl," said her mother,

“ what distresses you ? That something has done so, I have observed for these two days.”—

Helena had never in her life concealed from her mother a single thought of her heart. Something made her wish to do so now ; but she *would* not obey the impulse —and, sobbing, said—

“ What a long time it is to be before we are to see Frederick again !”—

“ It appears a long time to you, my Helena, but I,— who have seen so many more years glide away than you have,—know that it will soon be gone ; and, in the mean while, we shall hear of him continually, and he will be enriching himself with knowledge, and will also be highly gratified, no doubt, by viewing the wonders, and beauties of his own country. Mr. Beaumont is, in my opinion, very right in wishing him to see them before he leaves England ; which it is probable that he will do, hereafter, for the purpose of acquainting himself with the manners, habits, and governments of other countries :—but, my

dear Helena, you must not think so seriously about Frederick."—

Helena threw an inquisitive glance on her mother; but only said—

" Well, Mamma!—if it is good for Frederick,—and if he will not forget us,"—

" That I am sure he will not ;"—said Mrs. Villiers, " so, give me a kiss, Love; and come and read to me."

Helena kissed her mother fondly, and had now her free choice from the whole range of their little library.

" Let me read the play you just now quoted from, Mamma: it is always charming; and now it will make us merry."

Mrs. Villiers, as her darling was reading, thought her the sweetest Rosalind she had ever seen, and the day ended much more cheerfully than was promised by the April morning with which it began.

In a few days afterwards, further consolation came, in the form of a letter, to Mr. Melcombe.

‘ MY DEAR SIR,

“ You have a right to know the progress of your own work ; and, as this claim, on your side happens to coincide with inclination on my own (not always the case, I believe, between tutor and pupil),—here I sit, pen in hand, awaiting the inspiration of the epistolary Muse, if such an one there be, while I ‘ prate of my where-about,’ as well as my *what-about*, since you landed me at this place. Should I draw the picture of my first week, Oxford would occupy but a scanty portion of the canvass, for it merely contained the outward case of him whose better part was passing the whole of its time at ——. Finding at last, however, that this disunion was attended with many inconveniences, and that neither body nor mind could carry on business to any purpose since the dissolution of the partnership, I suddenly resolved to recall the *anima vagula*, at once; and both parties have kept pretty steadily together ever since.—As to the result, you will, I know, indulge me by accepting such

desultory accounts of things as may fall from the pen of one who has never used himself to keep a catalogue of his actions. Besides, it is your opinion I remember, on the subject of painting, (and why not of writing too?) that the spirit which had appeared in the first sketch of the artist too frequently evaporates under the deliberate operation of finishing.—Now, then, for a bold outline of my studies.—I have not yet entered into that exclusive spirit, of which my fellow-collegians are pretty generally accused; by considering Christ Church, as a kind of miniature metropolis to the rest of the university; but, young as I am, I *will* commend that rigid rule of discipline by which application is not left entirely discretionary at the most indiscreet period of human life.

" For my own particular studies, they are directed, in part, to the completion of that course into which you had already initiated me, and, in part, to the new career of reading which makes up the college routine. With respect to both, I hope I

may say of myself that I am not an idler ;— yet I cannot but confess, my friend, that the absence of your anxious directions, comiments, and explanations, is a blank very inadequately filled by your successors in the office of tuition. I mean not to complain, however, of deficiency, whether intellectual or moral, in the gentlemen to whom I allude; yet I do feel that the illumination which proceeded from the heart, in alliance with the head, of my late Mentor, the cordial zeal, with which he taught, are unhappily no more—and I am driven to supply the want, as I can, by endeavouring to imagine for myself, in every instance, what would have been that peculiar essence which *he* would have extracted for my benefit, from the lesson in hand.

“ Were I to be caught by every lure which is held out for my acquaintance in this curious cluster of societies, I should shut up my books, and govern myself entirely by Pope’s rule, that,

‘ The proper study of mankind is man.’

Should I, on the contrary, resist them all, I should be a hermit professed. Each of these courses having its appropriate absurdities, I endeavour like a philosophical Frederick as I am, (tell Helena,) to strike into the golden mean. Very strange mixtures of character do I find within the walls of the same college ; and, occasionally, still stranger, in the person of the same individual. But I have promised to send you a few sketches from these living subjects;—an harder task than I was aware of when I made the engagement. In truth, Sir, they are such a restless, motley crew that it would require a steadier hand and eye than mine to catch their likenesses :—describe them ?—describe a *non-descript* !

“ However, as well as I can make them out, here they are.

“ There are some men amongst us,—yes, Sir, *men*!—we have not all of us, as yet, begun to shave, it must be owned ; but what of that ?—men we constantly call ourselves, and so men pray let us be —some men, then, I say, there are amongst

us, who, during the greatest part of the day, are busily illustrating Young's doctrine of the 'Centaur not fabulous,' by vaulting into their saddles immediately after breakfast, and never quitting them till dinner time. This mania resists the united efforts of 'all the doctors, and both 'the proctors,' to control it;—perhaps, however, they would do better in letting these equestrian students alone:—who knows what profound treatises on the veterinary art, or, what useful lectures on the menage, may be the consequence—forming a valuable supplement to the histories of the Trojan horse, and the *stud*s of Achilles, Diomede, Nestor, &c. which are all left by these gentlemen in the hands of the lecturers *within doors*.—Then, we have other students who apply themselves with such unremitting assiduity to the *exercises* of the tennis court, and billiard room, that, should the University at any time encourage the compilation of a modern work 'De re 'Gymnasticâ,' there will be no want of qualified competitors for the undertaking. Nor

do I see why a new institution, in imitation of the rites of Bacchus, with proper deviations from the pagan part of the ancient ceremonials, might not be very prosperously established under the auspices of many accomplished *Bilos* that I could name, who would play their parts in this learned festivity to admiration.

“ To talk a little more seriously, however, there are some amongst us, who, I may say, are singularly gifted with the art of study—that art which, when cultivated with moderation, brings the endowments of nature to perfection—refines our ideas, makes us acceptable companions to each other, and, what is, in my estimation, of greater import, fits us for the society of that lovely sex whose precious converse alone can finish the task, and smooth away the rough corners of the mind; for, surely, Sir, without this, philosophy is but cold speculation—wisdom itself but monotonous dulness—and lordly man would be but a learned savage.—Yes, to you I will declare—for you will understand, and concur with

me,—that all the honours of all the Universities would not raise on my cheek such a genuine glow of pride as a few words of commendation from our excellent friend Mrs. Villiers,—much—O much less, could they teach ‘my bosom’s lord to sit so lightly on it’s throne,’ as would one heavenly smile of approbation on the dimpled cheek of her soul-inspiring daughter. But I am now on wings that would bear me I know not whither—and lower subjects have suddenly lost all interest in my thoughts. Let me, then, stop here—and, only charging you to express for me to our charming friends all that esteem, affection, admiration, can dictate, bid you briefly farewell. Believe me ever faithfully and respectfully,

“Yours,

“FREDERICK BEAUMONT.”

Mr. Melcombe communicated as much of this letter as he thought proper, to Helena, and the whole of it to her mother.

CHAP. XX.

ALL things proceeded in their usual course at —— for many months. Letters were frequently interchanged between Mr. Melcombe, and Frederick; but nothing could exceed the disappointment of the latter, on hearing how much pains were to be taken in his education. He was certain that he should like no part of Great Britain so well as Wales, and no companions half so well as Mr. Melcombe, Mrs. Villiers, and—Helena: but, submit he must;—he, therefore, resolved to do it gracefully, and said but little on the subject:—that little, however, was very expressive.

In the mean time, the trio at —— continued, and, with great reluctance, at length concluded, the reading of Anacharsis.

The high celebrity of the characters introduced by the author; the ingenuity of the vehicle by which his information is

conveyed; his faithful, and deeply interesting records of the manners, arts, policy, and warfare, of the Grecians at the most shining periods of their history; the acute, pertinent, and profound reflections of the writer, and the enlightened comments, or illustrations, of the reader, composed altogether an entertainment so rich, various, instructive, and delightful, as both mother and daughter declared that they had never known before.

It was in the spring that followed Frederick's establishment at Oxford, that Mr. Melcombe wrote to his young friend, soliciting his assistance in a circumstance of peculiar distress, which had overwhelmed Mr. Morgan.

Within a few days after it was dispatched, Mr. Melcombe's servant brought a letter from the post, and followed his master with it to the house of Mrs. Villiers. •

“ From Frederick,” — said Mr. Melcombe, as he broke the seal.—His coun-

tenance altered, as he read. Mrs. Villiers and Helena anxiously kept their eyes upon him ; but refrained from enquiries. He read it through in silence, and—put it into his pocket.

“ Something is the matter, I am sure,” thought Helena ;—and she puzzled her little head, to no purpose, in guessing what it might be. Mrs. Villiers was anxious also, and, thinking she perceived that Mr. Melcombe was desirous of an opportunity of speaking to her alone, told Helena, aside, that it was a pity she should lose so fine a day for sowing her flower seeds.

Helena, finding she was to hear nothing, was perfectly ready to go to her employments in the garden ; but, however it happened, she contrived to sow onion seeds in the flower-borders, and sweet peas among Windsor beans ; and, which was still more unusual,—planted all her hyacinth roots head foremost.

“ Frederick has fallen into a scrape,” said Mr. Melcombe to Mrs. Villiers. “ His

father's project of sending him to spend his Christmas with Lord —— has, I fear, produced more harm, than good. Lord —— and his party, I well know to be desperate gamblers ; and especially, among other games, at billiards. This is one of Frederick's favourite amusements, and during his visit, he lost more money in this way than he afterwards liked to think of. I wrote him a lecture at the time ; but, after all, he is,—nineteen ! This is his letter :—it is in answer to one which I had addressed to him, requesting his assistance in relieving my neighbour, Mr. Morgan ; whose particular occasion for such relief I had fully described to him.”

FREDERICK BEAUMONT’s *Letter to Mr. MELCOMBE.*

“ In what words shall I express to my kind, my honoured, my confiding Friend, the mortifying, disgraceful, and most humiliating reply which I am compelled to make to his truly distressing letter ? A

worthy man in want—in affliction—his child at the point of death!—and I, driven by my own infatuated folly to refuse him a helping hand, and this, too, when it is called for by you.—A thousand lectures, and ten thousand precepts, even from my beloved Mentor himself, could not have stricken me with such conviction, and remorse.

“ To end these fruitless lamentations, my dearest Friend, be it known that when your most kind, though embarrassing letter arrived, I was just seated at my desk, for the purpose of informing you that, a few evenings ago, being deeply engaged at billiards, with a set of gay fellows, as young and unthinking as myself, I joined them in staking, as usual, trifling sums upon the game: but on this unfortunate evening the bets were repeatedly doubled; and moreover there arose a contest between myself, and one of my companions, on the superiority of play—and, more from idle vanity, or false shame, at stopping

short, while others were inclined to go on, than from any desire of gain,—being also in very high spirits, I continued to double the stakes, with various success ; 'till, at the conclusion, I was a loser of 100*l.* and I was actually preparing to entreat that you would immediately advance me the whole of my quarterly supply, without which I shall not be enabled to pay my debt of honour—as it is called—nor, I am sorry to say, even then, my debts of *honesty* to my tradesmen.

“ In short, I have been, as you perceive, not merely thoughtless, but blameably extravagant ; and most heartily do I feel that I merit the very deep mortification, and disappointment, which I endure at being constrained to send you such an answer, to such an application.

“ Let me hear from you, I beseech it, —as soon as possible ; and give me, if you may, — the consolation of hearing that you obtain some assistance for Mr. Morgan, without distressing yourself :— and tell me, above all, that his child will

not die. With the warmest sentiments of respect, and regard,

“ I remain,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your faithful Friend,

“ And obedient Servant,

“ F. BEAUMONT.”

Mr. Melcombe, within a very few days, replied to this penitent epistle; and informed the writer that, though not without inconvenience, he had been enabled, in part by the aid of others, to relieve Mr. Morgan's difficulties, and that the life of his child was no longer in danger.

CHAP. XXI.

THE last summer of Frederick's exile, as he always called it, at length arrived ; and, in the beginning of the long vacation, he went to London with his friend Sackville, who had agreed to be the companion of his tour to Scotland, and who wished to pass a few days with a friend in London, before their departure.

Frederick, in the mean time, fixed himself in a neighbouring hotel.

When their allotted week was nearly expired, Frederick received a letter from Mr. Melcombe, informing him that the poor old man of the cave had been ^{entered} at St. Luke's ; adding an anxious wish that Frederick would enquire personally into the state of the patient, and enclosing a letter which would gain him admittance to the hospital.

Frederick, accordingly, resolved to go thither on the following day.

On his arrival at the place, he enquired after the poor sufferer, by name ; and was told that he was not better ; that he was frequently in a raving state, and, when composed, was usually sullen. Frederick hesitated whether he should proceed to an interview. He felt an anxiety to see the unhappy man, that he might compare his present situation with that in which he had seen him before ; and, at the same time, a melancholy curiosity to behold the various effects of insanity in other unhappy beings :—yet, he could not but shrink from the horror which he anticipated, in witnessing such a scene.

After a long pause, however, the former motives prevailed ;—he presented his letter, and was admitted.

He was conducted immediately to poor old Woodland. He found him in his sullen mood, and sitting on a bed of straw—with arms folded, and eyes fixed upon the ground. His grey head was now become perfectly white—as was his beard, which had grown to a considerable length.

The hue of his skin was cadaverous, his body wasted to a skeleton. His eyes, which had once before made Frederick pause by their expression, grew suddenly red with fury;—and, in a few moments, he started on his feet, and rushed towards Beaumont, with his fingers bent like the talons of a pouncing eagle;—but his chain stopped him short, and he broke out into a convulsive laugh. He then raved with hideous violence; but without any allusion to past circumstances, which seemed to be all forgotten. Frederick was shaken to the soul by what he saw, and turned from him in an agony. He passed hastily on, among other wretched objects whose vehement, and unconnected ravings declared them to be in the same deplorable condition.

One figure, however, at once arrested his whole attention. It was that of a man, apparently in the prime of life; of a lofty stature, and athletic frame; while as he stood erect in his cell, he bore about him an air of majesty, that seemed “to control the world.” His hair, and beard, were dark,

and shaggy ; and the ragged remains of the blanket that was loosely thrown around his bony limbs, fell into such accidental folds as gave additional effect to the grand, but tremendous character of his whole person. He was, for a few moments, still ;—while Frederick, who was painfully examining him, had the image of the Roman Marius full on his mind. Insensibly, he drew nearer to the unfortunate Being.—whose eyes flashed fire at his approach.—And now the madman, raising his gaunt right arm with the action of an orator, when he would strongly agitate his audience, broke out,—“ I hope—I hope ! ” —What did he hope ? —Frederick listened, in breathless anxiety, for his next words ; but the speaker became dumb.—Awhile, he seemed to ruminate ;—then raved as incoherently as the rest.

Beaumont enquired of the keeper what were the circumstances of this man’s story, but they were unknown. He had been brought from another house of confinement ; and those who had conveyed him

to his present abode, had cautiously forbore from every explanation of the cause of his malady. Of many among the remaining sufferers, the man had more to tell ; and Frederick, who secretly resolved to come no more into this house of woe, was solicitous to gain, for the first and last time, whatever information he could collect respecting the calamities that surrounded him. Many, he found, had owed the loss of reason to disappointed love ; more to perverted religion ; but most to causes with which the mind had no concern.

In the division appropriated to those whose recovery was not hopeless, he beheld a lovely young woman, who smiled as he approached her, and looking earnestly upon him, exclaimed—

“ It is, it is, the spirit of Henry,—and he is come from Heaven to fetch me : —but you do not speak to me—no, I see you have not forgiven me !—Well !—I deserve that.” Then, she crossed her hands over her bosom, and, looking piteously in his face, again broke out—

" Yet, pray — O pray, forgive me, Henry! — I could not help it!" — and then, she burst into a passion of tears.

Frederick, who was unable to restrain his own,—hoping that she might be relieved by weeping, and forget him if he disappeared, hastened away from her, and would see no more.—He, however, commanded his feelings sufficiently to enquire who this touching creature was.

He was informed, that her name was Emily Burrard, and that she was the daughter of a navy-agent, who had promised her in marriage to a young lieutenant, but had required him to wait for his promotion to the rank of captain, before he should claim his bride; since the father had several other children, and his income, though a good one, would expire with himself. The conditions were accepted; and, in the mean time, the favoured youth was nearly domesticated at the house. The passion of the lovers was strengthened from day to day. Henry, while still a lieutenant, was ordered on another voyage; and when the

summons came, they parted ;—with bitter regrets on both sides, but in the confident hope that, as war was now raging almost universally, he should obtain his expected promotion during the voyage, and then return to claim the promise of the father, and the hand of the daughter.

Soon after his departure from England, the affairs of Mr. Burrard took, unexpectedly, a very unfavourable turn ; and, at the same time, one of the richest merchants in London saw, and admired his daughter Emily. He offered the most magnificent settlements, and whatever else could most effectually tempt a sordid father to sell his child. She kneeled,—wept,—entreated,—reminded him of his promise,—and at last exerted resolution to tell him, that *her* promise was sacred,—and had been made so by himself. The father then prepared a loaded pistol, locked the door ; and, kneeling in his turn, swore, in the sight of Heaven, that, unless she should instantly consent to take Mr. Robson for her husband, he would blow out his own

brains upon the spot. She screamed with terror, promised, and complied. After the marriage, she was never seen to smile.

Henry, on his return from his voyage,—heard, with unspeakable sorrow and indignation, what had happened in his absence. The vessel to which he belonged, not being immediately ordered out again, he suddenly quitted the navy, and entered as a volunteer in a regiment which was going abroad,—with a gloomy resolution to seek his death. In a few months afterward, Emily was informed that he had taken these desperate measures for her sake, and, that he had found in battle the death he sought.

This intelligence, falling on a mind already shaken to the foundation, by the cruelty of an heartless husband, rapidly bewildered her reason. She was placed in a private mad-house; but, within the space of two years, her husband failed for an immense account, and, unable any longer to support her at his own expense, removed her to St. Luke's, where, for a while, he occasionally came to her; but

the sight of him never failing to throw her into the cruellest agonies, the managers of the hospital prohibited his visits. †

When Frederick had left the house, he threw back a pitying glance upon the grated windows—and beheld, once more, the majestic figure before described. He watched the unhappy Being some moments, and, at last, mournfully departed.

When he had reached his hotel, he felt himself disabled by the deep depression of his spirits, from writing to Mr. Melcombe. He desired to be denied to any who might chance to call; and, under an indiscreet, though natural infatuation, abandoned himself without restraint to the painful impressions he had received.

The countenance of the unhappy female was stamped indelibly on his mind, her heart-piercing tones were still ringing in his ear; and he took refuge from her idea in the dreadful, but less afflicting image, presented by his memory, of the extraordinary man whose history was unknown.

After an hour's painful meditation, his

thoughts began to arrange themselves into a poetical form, and he seemed to obtain some slight relief from the tumult of his mind, by the mechanical act of writing them down. They were thus expressed :—

I.

In yon dread scene which hope shall never cheer,
In that lone cell, where anguish finds no rest,
Where Pity drops her unavailing tear,
Which falls unheeded on the fever'd breast,

II.

There—Misery her iron sceptre shews,
Triumphant 'midst the horrors of her reign—
Looks down contemptuous on life's common woes,
And mocks the pang that Reason can sustain.

III.

Yon squalid, naked, with'ring form behold!—
Oh! hear that piercing shriek, that dismal moan!—
Think on the wretch those hideous bars infold;
Deplore his fate, and shudder at his groan!—

IV.

He raves aloud—he shakes his galling chain—
Each clank fills up the pauses of despair.—
He raves of hope—of hope! ah wretch! how vain!—
Nor peace, nor hope, shall ever enter there.

v.

O hie thee to thy bed of straw, and weep!
 Know, if thou canst, the comfort of a tear!—
 O may it soothe thy burning brain to sleep,
 And charm to rest the Furies working there!—

vi.

Pale morning still the paler Sufferer shews,
 Wildly recounting all his sorrows o'er :—
 No sleep to thee shall minister repose,
 Save—Son of Misery!—that which wakes no more!

vii.

O lost to life!—to worse than ruin hurl'd,
 Whence did thy tortur'd sense this anguish find?
 In what wild tempest of this troublous world,
 Sank the majestic fabrick of thy mind?

viii.

It matters not—the past!—I, too, may share
 That dreadful doom!—I, what thou art, may be—
 Farewell! farewell! thou wreck of deep despair—
 No longer dares this heart to dwell on thee!

Frederick, the next morning, wrote to Mr. Melcombe, acquainting him with the hopeless state of the old man, and detailing a few other particulars of his melancholy visit. His letter concluded thus:

“ There was one more object of deep and painful interest—and, to save myself the misery of recurring to it again, I send

you some lines which I pencilled down on my return to the hotel ; and which, believe me, are a true, however horrible, resemblance.

“ Farewell, my dear Sir. To-morrow, we set out for Scotland. Say every thing for me to our charming friends, and tell them I begin to count the weeks, and hereafter shall count the days, to Christmas.

“ Ever most faithfully,

“ And gratefully, your’s,

“ F. B.”

CHAP. XXII.

CHRISTMAS was, at length, at hand :—when Mr. Melcombe received a letter from Frederick Beaumont, announcing an early day, on which he “ hoped, once more, to have the happiness of seeing him,”—adding “ that he should make every exertion to be

with him by dinner-time ; for that, now, every minute was an hour."

The very letter made a little jubilee at both houses. The morning at last arrives,

" But heavily in clouds brings on the day."

An evil, the more serious, as the snow had been falling during the greater part of the night. It was now descending faster and faster.—Helena ventured out to reconnoitre : looked up,—looked down,—and shrank back into the house in dismay.

Mr. Melcombe grew uneasy ; the snow was now so deep, that scarcely any road could be accounted secure ; and that by which he knew that Frederick must pass, was more particularly dangerous, as its course lay directly along the edge of a fearful precipice : above it rose the mountain, on whose over-hanging top, the snows would often rest, in tremendous heaps, 'till the winds tumbled them to the bottom.

Mr. Melcombe now had hopes that Beaumont would make no attempt to travel that day ; but, that, wherever he might

be lodged, he would wait till he could proceed with safety :—these hopes, however, were cruelly damped with fears, suggested by the well-known impatience of Frederick's affectionate heart. Upon this last consideration, the dinner was ordered at a very late hour, on the chance of his arrival.

The fire blazed highly,—to increase the comfort and cheerfulness of his reception ;—but no Frederick appeared. The dinner was deferred, again, and again.

“ Let it wait,” said Mr. Melcombe, “ if it be ‘till midnight.”

The wind was howling tremendously ;—and he thought of the lofty trees that hung by their half-bared roots at the side of the road. He looked out :—it was total darkness.

At last, about nine o'clock, he heard the gate bell ring, and in a few moments afterward, the door opened, and Frederick entered with blood running from one of his hands, while he bore a young woman, apparently lifeless, in his arms.

“ Is it you, at last !” said Mr. Mel-

combe—"but, my dear Frederick, what has happened? Whence is this blood? and who is this unfortunate lady? She is not—good Heaven! I hope she is not dead!"—"O no, I trust not ;"—said Frederick, placing her in an arm chair.—"I can tell you nothing now, my dear Sir,—but, for Heaven's sake, order a bed to be prepared immediately, and let her be removed to it as soon as possible." The maids were dispatched to the rooms above;—and Mr. Melcombe and Frederick were indefatigable in their efforts to recover the lady from her insensible state. At last, she slowly opened her eyes, and began to gasp for breath.

"Where am I?" cried she, wildly.

"You are with those who will take care of you," said Mr. Melcombe, "and you must now think of nothing but going to rest,—you shall have an attendant to sit and watch by your side."

"All this, to a stranger, is kind indeed:—but—I cannot talk!"

The housekeeper now appeared, and as-

sisted Mr. Melcombe in supporting her up the stairs into Frederick's apartment, where every possible comfort had been prepared. Another room was immediately made ready for Frederick. And now, leaving the lady to the care of her attendants, which, as the gentlemen were soon happily informed, had already been productive of the most promising effects, we will go and hear what he has to relate. But first —Mr. Melcombe desired that some one might be sent immediately to Mrs. Villiers, with intelligence of Frederick's safe arrival. But carefully added an order, that no mention might be made of the accident, or the lady.

Returning to the dining-room, after these arrangements, he shook Frederick's hand with the most affectionate warmth; and, telling him that all his hope through the day had been that he would not come, entreated him to relate every circumstance that had befallen him. Frederick was so rejoiced at feeling himself, once more, in Mr. Melcombe's parlour, that, for some

time, he could talk of nothing else ; except, indeed, that he poured out a thousand questions respecting Mrs. Villiers and Helena—all of which he entreated might be answered, before he should enter upon the detail of his own adventures.

In the mean time, Mr. Melcombe ordered the long protracted dinner to be set upon the table.

It came—and Mr. Melcombe's old port flowed abundantly to the health of the ladies ; as also to the happy recovery of the interesting stranger whom accident had thrown into their charge.

“ And now, my dear Sir,” said Frederick, while they drew their chairs to the fire, after dinner—“ I will tell you my adventures—for such they really have been. My first day's journey is not worth describing. It had no fault but that of being too deliberate ; but, from the aspect of things this morning, I began to fear that the journey of to-day would be much more so. I consulted with the landlord, the drivers, and the travellers. The landlord,

of course, *knew* that the roads were impassable—the drivers doubted—but promises on my part of double fees, immediately satisfied them that they were perfectly safe. On this last assurance, which I wished to believe, I returned in triumph to the landlord, and ordered a chaise with four horses, which though not, as it proved, of Pegasean breed, did really contrive to carry me as far as ——, just before it was dark: and there, you will say, I ought to have remained:—granted;—but here I now am, and heartily do I rejoice that I did not. I hired a man, with a lantern, to precede us; all idea of going beyond a foot pace being now at an end, on account both of the darkness of the night, and the depth of the snow; to say nothing of the precipices by the road side. When we had proceeded about a mile on our way, I heard, behind us, the horn of a mail-coach. The vehicle passed us in safety; but immediately afterward, in turning off to another road, it drove against a bank, additionally heightened by the drifted snow,

and was overturned in a moment. The wounds in my hand, which so much alarmed you at my entrance, were occasioned by my thrusting it through the glass to reach the handle of the lock, on the sound of a scream from a female voice. I ran instantly to the coach-side, and, as I was offering my assistance to the passengers within, was suddenly saluted, in a shrill tone, with—‘ O Sir, there is nobody here, ‘ but me and my mississ,—and I darc say ‘ we shall both be killed.’

“ ‘ I hope not,’ said I, ‘ but I am afraid ‘ your lady is hurt, as she does not seem to ‘ speak.’—‘ O no! I dares to say not, Sir, ‘ —but I’m sure *I* am;—and then, I am ‘ so very narvish that I am frightened out of ‘ my wits.’

“ I entreated the lady to give me her hand, that I might assist her; but before it was possible for her to do so, the detestable Abigail had clambered out, without further ceremony;—and, woman as she was,—I did not help her.

“ When she was out of the way, I gently

raised the lady ; and well it was that I did so ; for she had fallen with her face in the snow, and was in great danger of suffocation. I got her out, however, unhurt ; but she had scarcely breath to tell me I had saved her life. I was preparing to lift her into my chaise ; but she shrank from the idea of again entering a carriage, and begged that she might walk to any house, where she could but find shelter 'till the morning. I told her positively that this could not be ; but that, if she would not venture into the chaise, she might be placed on one of the horses, if she could sit without a side-saddle, while I rode another by her side ;—and, further, as you see, my dear Sir, I, without ceremony, invited her hither. She thankfully accepted my proposal, and my guardianship. ‘ But,’ said she, ‘ what will become of my poor ‘ servant ?’ The maid, not having had, on her part, any of this consideration for her mistress, I cannot say that I very strongly participated in the lady’s concern for her. I proposed, however, that she should be

put into the chaise, with the *rest* of the luggage. This was accordingly done ; and we passed slowly on, by the light of the lantern. The lady was well wrapped up ; yet I heard her teeth chatter, poor thing ! so, hastily taking off my great coat, I cast it over her shoulders.—She exclaimed against this ; but as she had not seen me disrobe myself, I assured her, as was strictly true, that it came out of the chaise. All, however, would not serve to keep life, or at least, the warmth of life within her ; and when I took her from the horse, she fainted with terror, fatigue, and cold.

“ And now, Sir, as you are acquainted with all that followed, you know as much of her history as I do.”

CHAP. XXIII.

Mrs. Villiers and her daughter had made the most agreeable of all transitions, from fear of evil to certainty of good, at the moment which brought them tidings of Frederick's safe arrival. They went to rest, without uneasiness, and arose with spirits renewed by tranquil sleep at night, and a brilliant sun in the morning.

As Helena was a constant walker in almost all weathers, the shrubbery was swept from the snow for her accommodation ; and, as soon as she had breakfasted, the beauty of the morning tempted her forth, while the sun was shining.

When she returned to the house, without throwing off her walking habiliments, she sought out her mother, and entreated her to bear her company in a walk.

" No, I thank you, Helena ;—it is too cold for me : I have lately been again threatened with the tooth-ache, and shall

sit still by the fire-side." Then, regarding her daughter more attentively, she smilingly said—" You are very superb this morning, Miss Helena."

Her dress was a black velvet pelisse, ornamented with a deep lace: over her white beaver Spanish hat, was thrown a very elegant drooping feather;—and the whole attire did certainly set off the bloom of health and exercise to the greatest advantage.

" O the little coquette!—what, you did not know who might come in before you had finished your walk?"

Helena laughed—put her hand over Mamina's eyes, that she might not see her blush—then kissed her;—and the laugh, and the blush were not gone, when the door opened, and in burst Frederick.—She turned round:—his eye caught the whole expression.—He started;—and, for a moment, paused;—then, flying towards them,—“ Here they are,” he cried;—and threw his arms around them both,—begged a kiss of Mrs. Villiers; and then snatched

one from Helena, without waiting for the ceremony of her consent.

"What a confident rogue it is!" said Mr. Melcombe, entering;—"now it would be as much as my life is worth to do that."

"No, Sir"—replied Frederick—"not if you had been away two years and a half:—when that is your case, *I* will give you leave."

"That's very kind of *you*," said Helena.

"Well!"—cried Frederick, clasping his hands together, "there are few such moments in life as this!"—and now he stole a glance at Helena—then sat down by Mrs. Villiers—then, being too happy to sit still, flew from Mrs. Villiers to Helena, and from Helena to Mrs. Villiers again—then, catching Helena's hands,

"But now, tell me, are you glad to see me, Helena?—are you one quarter, half-quarter as happy as I am?"

"Yes, yes—I dare say I am—perhaps I am—I don't know what I am."

She was, *in truth*, so happy, that she could have cried; so she laughed as much

as possible, for fear she should.—After a long continuation of this delightful transport, which is far more interesting to share, than to read of, he began—

“ Well!—but I have a vast deal to tell you, my dear friends—Oh! there is no end to what I have to tell you!—but first,—and principally,—I have brought a lady with me.”

“ A what?”—said Helena, colouring—and then she bit her lips, and coloured still more.

“ A very pretty young lady indeed—I found her last night in the snow, poor little creature, half dead; and we are going to beg Matrina, and you, to come and visit her;—that is, Mr. Melcombe is,—and I do think it is now almost time for me to let him talk a little.”

“ Mr. Melcombe is very much obliged to you,” said Helena; “ for I am sure you cannot have breath enough to talk any more yourself.” Mr. Melcombe then began to explain,—and finished with telling Mrs. Villiers that he was informed by his house-

keeper, that the lady was somewhat recovered, yet still so stiff as to be totally unable to rise ; and that she had been asking a variety of questions respecting the house in which she was, and its inhabitants ; and seemed to be somewhat embarrassed on hearing that there was no lady at the head of it.—“ So now, my dear friend, the end of my story is, that I want to solicit you and Helena to do me the honour of returning with us, and taking possession for the day. You may, then, visit the lady in her own apartment, and she can consult with you upon her future plans ;—and then—think but of the happiness it will confer upon us !”

Mrs. Villiers promised ; and further, said, that, “ if Mr. Melcombe approved, she would invite the lady to become her inmate as soon as she could be removed, and remain with her till she should be able to pursue her journey.”

When Mrs. Villiers and Helena arrived at Mr. Melcombe’s, they sent up proper messages to the fair stranger, requesting permission to wait on her in her own apart-

ment. They were admitted, and found her, with a countenance extremely pale and delicate, sitting up in bed. She expressed her distress at receiving, with so little ceremony, two ladies, to whom she was entirely unknown ; adding, that she was nearly overwhelmed with so much kindness from perfect strangers.

Mrs. Villiers entreated that she might not be considered in that light ; and further assured her that, as to " Mr. Melcombe, he was the friend of every human being in distress, and that he had solicited herself and daughter to pass the whole day at his house, on purpose that they might be obliged with an opportunity of attending to her in her present distressing state ;" which account was concluded with the proposed invitation. The lady, with renewed acknowledgments, expressed her hopes that she should be able to proceed on her journey on the following day.

" Most certainly," she added, " I should have made no more journies in this world, had I not fortunately been found by that

benevolent gentleman who extricated me from the snow ; and guarded me from the cold, by wrapping me in his own surtout."

Helena joined her insinuating entreaties to those of her mother ; but the lady pleaded that she was under a necessity of departing as soon as possible, for the purpose of meeting a friend, who was travelling towards her from a distant part of Wales.

" This," said she, " was the object that emboldened me to venture in such roads on such a night ; and had there been a little moon-light, or star-light, or any light but the rush-lights which I believe were in the lamps of the coach, I still think that we should have triumphed over our difficulties : —and now, my kind visitors, let me not detain you any longer from your friends. Since I know that you are in the house, I shall feel myself quite at ease ; and, after dinner, I may hope, perhaps, to be indulged with another visit."

While the ladies were above stairs, Mr. Melcombe had given directions for as ele-

gant a repast as it was possible to create in a wilderness ;—and, by sending the gardener one way, and the footman another, he succeeded almost to the height of his wishes. When they sat down to table, Mrs. Villiers scolded him for his magnificence.

“ What ! not entertain two ladies,—and two such ladies, below, and another above, with a dinner fit to be eaten ! we were all comfortless enough yesterday, and to-day must make us amends ;—besides, my dear Madam, I must feast my returning Prodigal.—

“ What ! have you been eating—*hushes*, Frederick ?” asked Helena.

“ Or—*oats*, Frederick ?”—said Mr. Melcombe, smiling.—

“ What, in Scotland ?—no, faith ; with the Highland Chieftains, one fares more like Diyes than the Prodigal.

“ In the North, Sir, as Johnson *afterwards* expressed himself, we travelled like *princes* in their progress.”

When the happy party had, for some

time, enjoyed the unrestrained delight of conversation, Mrs. Villiers reminded Helena of their engagement with the invalid : they, accordingly, left the gentlemen while they attended her. She would not, however, suffer them to stay very long from their friends ; and, in a manner of peculiar sweetness, sent them away.

"I am charmed with your snowy maid," said she to Frederick :—"her manner is so engagingly soft ; and I am sure she has at least *one great qualification*, that of thinking more of every body than of herself."

"Yes,—and this was the case in the midst of the snow, last night, poor little thing."

"I wonder whether we shall ever see her again!"—said Helena.

"In all human probability, never,"—said Mr. Melcombe.

"Well, then, I don't like human probabilities, at all ; for I *do* like *her*."

At last, the hour of parting arrived, and Mrs. Villiers and Helena, wrapped in their

fors, and attended by their knights and 'quires, returned home, and retired to rest.

CHAP. XXIV.

MR. Melcombe had not yet left his own apartment in the morning, when the sudden appearance of a darkening cloud attracted him to the window. The sky wore a threatening aspect: small flakes of snow were descending, one by one,—usually a prelude to a heavy fall,—and he began to consider how he should again assemble the ladies, and whether it would be practicable to convey his fair guest to Mrs. Villiers's, which would be the most desirable arrangement for all parties.

In one of the garden walks he saw Frederick pacing very deliberately backwards and forwards, with his arms folded, and his eyes on the ground.

"Let the stricken deer weep"—said he to himself—"Poor Frederick!—he will not, I hope, be so unfortunate as I have been."

At breakfast, Frederick was somewhat absent; but seemed to rouse himself as by an effort,—and conversed with his usual cheerfulness. They now sent up their enquiries after the stranger-lady, and were answered, that she was much better; but, with the permission of the gentlemen, would take her breakfast above stairs, and join them shortly afterwards.

"Come then, Frederick; let us first pay a hasty visit to *our* ladies, and see how they have borne their walk home in the snow."

Frederick threw half a cup of scalding tea down his throat, and professed, with tears in his eyes, that he was quite ready to attend him. Mr. Melcombe at once perceived how the case stood, and though very sorry for him, was unable to restrain a smile.

“ O L—d !” said Frederick—“ I am scalded half to death, and you are more than half ready to laugh at me.”

After Frederick had quenched himself with a few sips of cool cream, he joined his friend in a walking race to Mrs. Villiers’s, which was—“ performed with ease in five minutes.”

“ Here is *nobody* but the *Piano-Forte*”—said Frederick, as they entered the parlour.

He knelt down behind Mr. Melcombe, and kissed the said Piano-Forte with great devotion. Mr. Melcombe perceived this in the looking-glass, though he mercifully passed it without notice.

Helena shortly entered, with a face full of care. Frederick caught her hand—

“ My dear little girl, what is the matter ?”

“ Why, Mamma has been half wild with the tooth-ache all night.”

Mr. Melcombe’s countenance fell.—Helena continued—

“ I was with her for several hours, try-

ing every means I could devise for her relief,—but all in vain."

" And so you, then, have had no sleep neither !" said Frederick.

" Not much—but I had no pain—except the torture of witnessing hers."

The gentlemen soon after—that they might not detain Helena from her anxious attendance on her mother, unwillingly left her, with a promise of calling again, and making further enquiries, in the course of the morning.

On their return home, they found in the parlour their fair Inmate, who accosted them with expressive acknowledgments, of their abundant attentions, which they very earnestly laboured to evade. They now made nicer observations on her countenance, and form, than had been possible on the night of her arrival.

She was young, and lovely ;—and her eyes bore witness to the softness of her heart, and the sweetness of her temper. Her figure, though small, was extremely elegant; and her manner singularly pre-

possessing. She heard, with much concern, of Mrs. Villiers's painful complaint, and expressed some apprehension that she was, unfortunately, the occasion of it. She was now very urgent for her departure; and, though Mr. Melcombe endeavoured to reconcile her to a delay which the present state of the roads seemed to render essential to her safety, she pleaded her engagement with her expecting friend, and entreated Mr. Melcombe's further assistance in procuring her a chaise, that she might immediately pursue her journey. His servant was dispatched, with proper orders; and, on the arrival of her vehicle, the lady, after renewed acknowledgments to all the party, drove away.

The gentlemen repeated their visit at Mrs. Villiers's, heard a somewhat better account of her, and received an invitation for the evening.

On arriving, they found her in her dressing-room, enjoying an interval of ease. In another hour, however, the pain returned with increasing violence, and she confessed

it was so acute, that if she knew how it was possible to have the tooth extracted, she would immediately submit to the operation. Mr. Melcombe suddenly bethought himself of a man who lived at two miles distance, and whom he had heard the country people extol as “ a fine tooth-drawer ;”—but he dreaded to recommend a trial of his skill.

Mrs. Villiers, however, entreated that he might be sent for :—in another half hour, the pain still encreasing, Mrs. Villiers enquired of her daughter, whether she was sure that the messenger was gone.

Helena flew to ask : but returned half choaked with grief, and indignation.

“ He is gone *now*, because I made him go, and on foot ;—but who, do you think, went half an hour ago, Mamma ?”

“ Who, my love ?”

“ Poor Marian ;—and she will be killed with cold, or buried in the snow, which is falling faster than ever.—That wretch John, it seems, raised a thousand difficulties about going—said that the horse had lost a shoe,

and it was not a night for a dog to be turned out in—and so forth ;—so Marian ran off in an instant,—and there was he, basking himself luxuriously before the fire."

" C—se the fellow!"—said Mr. Melcombe—and stamped with his foot.

An oath from the lips of Mr. Melcombe was a general stroke of electricity.

Mrs. Villiers's head leaped from its pillow. Helena stared in silence,—and Frederick disbelieved his sense of hearing.

The Culprit hid his face behind Mrs. Villiers's large, easy chair, not daring to utter a word.

" Poor soul!"—said she—" he is quite annihilated.—*I'll forgive you;*"—and she reached her hand to him, over the arm of the chair. He seized it affectionately—and, blessing her charity, declared that he must keep it to comfort him under his disgrace.

At last, Marian, and John, and the " fine tooth-drawer," arrived together. The gentlemen rose to withdraw.

" Take Helena with you"—said Mrs.

Villiers. I will have nobody with me but Betty—or suppose I have John—I am sure he will not be too *tinder-hearted*."

Helena went quivering from the apartment. Mr. Melcombe would not stir beyond the passage, which he paced with hurried steps till all was over.

Frederick conducted Helena into the parlour, placed her near the fire, and himself by her side. She shook from head to foot—he could not *help* supporting her with his arm,—soothing and consoling her, and laying the poor little head, that ached with agitation, upon his shoulder:—whether he ventured a kiss on her cheek, when it was there, I never yet have heard, and thought it rather impertinent to enquire.

"O Frederick! if one of *my* teeth would but have done as well!"—Frederick shuddered—

"What, those pearls!" cried he—"I had rather it should be every one of mine."

"And what a pretty figure you would make without them!"—said Helena, in a

deplorable voice, but feeling a secret hope that she should laugh at him hereafter.

"It is all over!" said Marian, bursting into the room—and my mistress says she is quite in Heaven, and begs you will all come up again."

They were again in her dressing-room in an instant, and found her laughing with Mr. Melcombe.

"O how thankful I am!" said the smiling, weeping Helena.

"Nay, no tears *now*, my love!" said Mrs. Villiers;—"the poor creature drew it to admiration, I assure you; and what do you think he demanded for the operation,—including his long, pleasant walk in the snow?"

"Half a guinea?"—asked Frederick.

"Not quite.—I gave him a crown piece, and he told me he had no change. I asked him what change he wanted."

"Why, Madam, it's sixpence a tuth, the first tuth, and two-pence a tuth ever after, draw as many as you wool!"

Helena laugh'd her eyes full of tears once more, and cried—

“ Stop him, Frederick ! you will never get it done so cheap again.”

Frederick, who was the only one that understood her allusion, shook his head at her, and told her she was an ungrateful little rogue.

“ What are they about now ?”—said Mrs. Villiers, turning to Mr. Melcombe.

“ I will tell you another time, Mamma.”

Thus happily ended this very comfortless day. Mrs. Villiers dismissed her visitors ; and Helena, after taking a tender leave of her mother, summoned Marian to her own apartment.

“ My dear Marian, I have been frightened out of my wits about you.—I never will forgive John ; and as for you, I shall love you the better for your conduct this night, as long as I live and breathe.”

“ Why then, Miss Helena, you would pay me over and over if had I walked to London and back again. What a good-

for-nothing girl must I be if I would not go all over the world barefoot for you; or your dear, good, sweet Mamma!—to think what you have done for me! and when I was such a poor little out-cast!"—and she cried and sobbed so much, that Helena begged she would talk of it no more.

Marian dried her eyes—and at last exclaimed—

" La! Ma'am, how very very handsome Mr. Beaumont is grown!—and then he is almost as tall as Mr. Melcombe, and looks as good."

Helena was standing before the glass, and saw such a crimson blush reflected from it, that she walked away—as if she thought that Marian could not see it, when she herself could not.

The next morning Mrs. Villiers and her daughter were still at breakfast, when their Knights sued for admittance, and were followed, soon afterwards, by Mrs. Lewis, who had accidentally heard of Mrs. Villiers's indisposition.

After mutual enquiries, and other gene-

ral conversation, Mrs. Lewis suddenly broke out—

“ I have a very curious piece of intelligence matrimonial to communicate, which I received yesterday in a letter from a friend in London.—What think you of Le Marquis de Sanspareil, and Miss Angle ?”

“ Charming !”—said Mr. Melcombe—
“ Harlequin and St. Cecilia !”

“ What !—my little French dancing-master !” cried Helena—“ I wonder what they gave him to make him stand still, all through the marriage ceremony ! O that I had been by to have heard him say, ‘ I do ‘ tak dee Charlot for my vedadde vife’.’— And she skipped about with as much grace, though with fewer varieties of steps, than he could have wished to behold.

“ How came it about ?”—asked Mrs. Villiers.

“ Why ”— said Mrs. Lewis —“ Miss Angle had a little money lately bequeathed to her, of which the Marquis was desperately enamoured. They had previously met at various parties in London, and he

found no difficulty in persuading her that she was one of the Muses, or Graces; or something of that nature ; and that in his eyes she would ever so remain. She was, no doubt, transported with the idea of a title, and made but one condition in accepting it—which was, that the projected marriage should be kept a profound secret, 'till it was over. This the Marquis promised, but, I dare say, felt it the hardest condition that had ever been imposed on him.

" But why so secret ?" said Mr. Melcombe. " I suppose they were welcome to each other."

" Perhaps,"—said Mrs. Lewis,—“ it was to create the interest of surprise,—for such it was to all the world. My friend adds—but I believe I have her letter—yes, here it is." Mrs. Lewis read :—

" It is a thousand pities that she is so unmercifully affected, for she really is an accomplished, and, in the opinion of the gentlemen, a fine woman.—I have met her in company several times, but, she was a sort of being whom I knew I should never

like, from the very first time I saw her, which was at a dinner at Lady Richmond's. Yet there was no sin in any thing she did, or did not do ; but she ate almost nothing —she would not touch a drop of wine, and said she *never* played at cards,—was sorry to confess her peculiarity, but she infinitely preferred a book :—then begged permission to fetch one from the library; and, while the other young people were playing at Lottery, she read Ossian"—

" Ossian !" cried Helena.

" Bad !—all bad !" — said Frederick—" very dull, if genuine ; and, being probably affected, unpardonable."

" And now,"—said Mrs. Lewis, " having fairly served up poor Miss Angle to the company, I shall leave her to your mercy, and wish you all a good morning." The gentlemen, however, took leave also, and attended her home.

CHAP. XXV.

IN a few days, the wind changed to the south, the rains descended, and the snows disappeared.

“ How is Frolick ?”—asked Frederick, one brilliant morning, when he had strayed in to Mrs. Villiers’s alone.

“ Very well,”—answered Helena, “ only a little saucy for want of exercise.”

“ Why, I was just thinking he might be so,” said Frederick—“ there is now neither wind, nor frost ;—and why, I pray, should we not have a ride to-morrow ?”

“ What think you, Mamma ?”—said Helena.

“ Is Mr. Melcombe at leisure ?” asked Mrs. Villiers—and at that moment was called out of the room.

“ And if Mr. Melcombe is *not* at leisure”—said Frederick—“ I suppose it need not be *always* Mr. Melcombe.”

Helena thought to herself, it was not necessary always ;—but she said—

“ Perhaps he will not think it civil if we do not ask him, because he always *has* ridden with us, you know, Frederick.”

“ H’m !—Well ! I will go and fetch Frolick, and make a trial of his temper.”

“ Let John saddle him for you.”

“ He may saddle him, but I had rather catch him myself ; — John drives and frightens him ;—I dare say he has not forgotten me yet.”

He was right,—Frolick stood still, when he approached ; and suffered him to take him, without a struggle,—for which he afterwards became almost a rival to Tiger in his mistress’s affections.

As Frederick was chatting with Mr. Melcombe after dinner, he began to talk of the mildness of the weather, then—of the horses, &c.—all ending with—

“ Helena has promised to take a ride to-morrow.”

“ Has she ?—it will be rather too cold for *her*, I think.”

"O no—not at all—she is not tender—she says she has walked almost every day throughout the winter."

"Yes—I *know* that.—Well!—if *her* mother has no objection, I am sure *I* can have none."

"No objection to what?"—thought Frederick—"to Helena's riding—or to riding with us himself?"—After a pause—he resumed—

"It seems to me five centuries since *I* had a ride with Helena."

Mr. Melcombe could *read* as well as Frederick could *spell*; and clearly comprehended that *he* was not included in the party;—but—he had a fancy to tease him a little—and said—

"It is a great while since *I* have ridden with Helena: the winter has not been favourable to riding."

"It seldom is"—said Frederick.—"I think your horse has not recovered his sprain, Sir, has he?"

"Yes—he has—Taffy told me yester-

day, that I might ride him whenever I pleased.”—Here, a pause—

“ O—then perhaps, Sir, you will ride with us.”

“ Certainly—with the greatest pleasure.”—Another pause—

Mr. Melcombe preserved so grave a countenance, that the innocent Frederick suspected nothing of the mischief it concealed.

Mr. Melcombe, however, thought he had tortured him long enough ; and, pretending to recollect what he had never forgotten,—coolly said—

“ No, I can’t, neither ;—for, on second thoughts, I have a Sermon to finish, which I particularly wish to preach on Sunday—and to-morrow is Saturday.”

“ O dear”—said Frederick—that’s a pity, though ;” and, being a little ashamed of his *first*, and very awkward attempt at hypocrisy, he proposed another glass of wine, and changed the subject.

In the morning, Frederick was early at

Mrs. Villiers's, where he found his fair friend quite ready to mount her horse.

A ride tête-à-tête with Helena was just the object which, with all his contrivances, he had been aiming, (though with little hope of success,) to effect.

Behold them, then, once more cantering along in their old haunts, as gay, as careless, and, (not being *too* much wiser,) still happier than ever. What shoots had their youthful minds been making since they last conversed together!—Frederick had studied far more than the majority of his companions, and had seen almost all that Great Britain presented of variety, in men, and manners, and the lovely face of nature. He had much to relate, and much to observe upon. Helena had, in the mean time, opened her mind to the enlightening influence of rational reading, had caught the emanations of good sense and feeling from the amiable mind of her mother, and learned the uses of history, and something of the knowledge of the human heart, from the highly cultivated intellect, and

freely imparted experience, of Mr. Melcombe. Her sentiments were lively, warm, and pure. Poetry seemed the native language of her soul,—and affection was its leading star.

With such qualifications, and a progress in the culture of them so far above their years, it was no wonder that their minds unveiled to the inspection of each other, nor that such inspection should occasion mutual pleasure and surprise.

From the interchange of opinions and observations, they stole insensibly into subjects nearer to the heart. The refinements of feeling, the higher touches of the generous virtues, even the aspirations of the soul in its intercourse with Heaven,—subjects on which, in their tender years, they had seldom communicated, were now all freely analyzed and discussed.

“ What a delightful range have we taken !”—said Frederick, resting his hand on the pommel of Helena’s saddle, as they paced gently along.

“ Literally, or figuratively ?”—she asked.

" I might say both—but I meant the latter. The mind is a greater wanderer than the body; and *our* minds have ranged this morning considerably further than either our own feet, or those of our horses, could have carried us; but, in both senses, we have travelled together, Helena;—I hope that we have not differed materially in any thing,—and what does this world afford that can equal the gratification of finding a kindred heart, that desires the same pleasures, deprecates the same pains, thinks the same thoughts,—though not always precisely in the same form?—In a word—when two souls love, hate, covet, and reject, with one impulse, then, indeed, they are happy, for then they are not alone in the world."

Helena felt something in the ardour of Frederick's manner that prevented her eye from meeting his,—or she would,—unsuspicious as she was of her own irresistible power of attraction,—she would have seen, in those eyes of his,—that he had found that kindred heart—and, perhaps, would also have

read in them a soft enquiry whether she had made the same discovery.

"We certainly have felt very much alike on most of the subjects which we have canvassed"—said Helena: "and on some you have instructed, as well as entertained me."

"Thou art a pretty Flatterer," said Frederick, his eyes sparkling with pleasure.

"You can flatter, too,"—said she.

"What! flatter *you*, Helena?—Not easily."

"O yes! you told me, just now, that the Scots ladies were too tall for you, because they were, generally speaking, much taller than I am."

"And I told you *true*," said he, smiling, "*ergo* I did not flatter. They are fine women, though, *notwithstanding*."

"We have had so many things to talk of, Frederick, that we just now passed unnoticed that beautiful lake into which you used, once upon a time, to throw stones; and then we would stand side by side, and watch the circling eddies, till they were lost

in each other. Do you remember the first time you succeeded in making Tiger—who was a puppy, then, as well as *you*,—go into the water after a stick?"

"Do I? Aye, Helena—and how you skipped about, and shook your little hands, when I had succeeded.—By the way, that lake, and the surrounding scenery, brings to my mind poor Mary of Buttermere, whom I saw last summer in my travels. She is now married, and has forgotten her unworthy lover."

"I never heard of her," said Helena; "do tell me all about her."

He did;—but, as it has been told a hundred times before, I shall not repeat it here.—Helena was deeply struck with the story, and fell into a rumination upon it, that held her, at intervals, for many minutes together.

Thus they talked, and thus they mused—and now *slowly* pursued their homeward way. The longer they had conversed, the more deeply they had penetrated into the recesses of each other's hearts.

It was, now, *more* than *surprise* that they mutually felt ;—it was *ecstacy*.—They had found the rock on which to set their earthly rest ;—they had reached

“ The undiscover’d country from whose bourne,”
like that of death,

“ No traveller returns ”——

and, thoughtless of the future, they struck triumphantly the sympathetic chord that lures the soul to bliss, or misery.

CHAP. XXVI.

HELENA, as was her custom, ran to seek her mother;—to whom she entered, smiling, and blooming, like the morn.

“ Have you had a pleasant ride, Helena ?”

“ O yes ! my dear mother—such a charming ride !” and she threw her arms round her—adding—“ I have been so happy !”—and she hid her face in her mother’s bosom, and left a tear behind.

“ Is this happiness, Helena ?”—asked Mrs. Villiers :—but she had not forgotten that it was ; and the sad recollection that hers had been only

“ A sun-beam in a winter’s day,”

mingled with apprehension of what her Helena’s fate might be, penetrated her susceptible heart, and an answering tear fell upon her own cheek.

"What have I done?"—said Helena—
"I have afflicted you with my folly;—
what a baby am I! that I cannot be happy
without being so weak."

Frederick met Mr. Melcombe with an open and delighted countenance—shook hands with him as if he had not seen him for a month;—told him that the day was the finest day that ever was seen, and—*that the country was in high beauty*; that his horse had never gone half so well in his life, and that Helena had more sense than Sir Isaac Newton. Mr. Melcombe smiled—and ordered dinner. They dined gaily, and Frederick drank the first glass to the health of Mrs. Villiers: Mr. Melcombe filled a bumper—and bowing—drank it in silence.—

"Now," said Frederick, "for a brimmer to the fair Helen!"—

Mr. Melcombe, seeing him in a state of such exquisite happiness, could not bear to give it a check, even by letting him know that he understood the cause—much less to chill the rising glow of love with

the warnings of prudence and experience ; yet, all this he secretly felt, must necessarily be done.

But Mr. Melcombe was a prudent man, —will some sagacious critic observe—and ought not to have deferred this till it was too late.—Mr. Melcombe became deeply sensible of this, and reproached himself for his delay ; yet, may not six words be alleged in his excuse ?—Mr. Melcombe was a man of great *feeling*, as well as, in general, of great prudence ; and ----- he was himself a Lover.

The next morning, Frederick called at Mrs. Villiers's, and found Helena alone, and reading.

“ How are you, Helena ? ” taking a seat by her side.—“ I did not tire you quite to death with our ride, did I ? —I thought it about three minutes long : but when I got home, I found Mr. Melcombe's dinner waiting for me ; and I began to bethink myself how long we had been gone, and how unaccustomed you have been of late to so much exercise.”

" I am not the least the worse for it," answered Helena.

" How happy I was!"—resumed Frederick—" when shall we ride again?"—and he took her flower-soft hand, and—timidly—kissed it.—His lips trembled—so did her hand :—she blushingly withdrew it.

" What are you reading, Helena?"—She put her finger on the page—it was the address of poor Burns to his lost Mary.

" They are exquisite lines,"—said Frederick; " I wish you would read them to me."

She began:—Frederick thought it was the musick of the spheres.—She could scarcely finish the last stanza, and a tear from each bright eye strayed down her cheeks.

' Then he falls to such perusal of her face,
As he would draw it.'——

Its vivacity was lost in tenderness ; and, charming as he had thought her, when she smiled, he thought her, at that moment, far more charming still.

He took the handkerchief that lay in her lap, and tenderly wiping the drops from her eyes,

" Oh Helena !" said he, " should you ever shed a tear that *I cannot* wipe away, what will become of me ?—never, never, may one tear fall from those eyes, but such as

' Angels shed on dying Saints.' "

He bent down his head upon the table ; —he had conjured up a phantom which brought terrors to himself.—After a few moments,—Helena in her softest voice,—replied—

" Yet if I should be borne down with sorrows, Frederick, one consolation I shall certainly have ; for I shall feel assured that you would, were it possible, remove them all."

" Heaven bless thee, thou sweet Believer, for that welcome confidence !—never, will I deceive, or disappoint it."

" I wonder"—said Helena—" how we

fell into such a melancholy train of ideas!"

"I know not—they have somehow seized us, without our own consent. For my part, I feel myself unable, and (what you may think strange) unwilling, quite to shake them off:—at least, while I am near you,—and behold you safe from all those evils, which I have been so ingenious in anticipating."

"So!" said Helena,—archly smiling,—“if I were *not* near you, I suppose, you would run away from your sombre fancies, as fast as you could,—forget me, and make yourself merry with fine folks.”

“I suppose you are not at all afraid of telling fibs, you little, dear, wicked, whimsical piece of enchantment;”—and he began to think the smile, and the dimple, became her best, after all.—Just as he had settled this point, at least for the present, Mrs. Villiers came in; shook hands with Frederick, sat down to her work; and soon after, bade him read to them.

"And suppose," said Mrs. Villiers, you read what you have now before you."

He did so—and the time flew rapidly by, till the dinner-hour arrived.

"I wonder," said Frederick,—“whether Mr. Melcombe wants me!—whether he has finished his sermon,—and whether, if he is busy, I might stay where I am!"—

"Really,"—said Mrs. Villiers—“I cannot undertake to satisfy any of these *whethers*, except the last. If you can be spared, you may certainly stay here."

"O! then I'll soon satisfy all the rest," answered Frederick, “if you will only give me a piece of paper."

He wrote, and excused himself; and by Mrs. Villiers's desire, concluded his note with a request that Mr. Melcombe would join them himself—as soon as he should be at leisure.

To this Mr. Melcombe answered:—

“ You may stay—I will join you hereafter.”

They dined *en trio*. Frederick was ap-

pointed Master of the Ceremonies. He was all attention to Mrs. Villiers,—all devotion to Helena ;—and performed the honours with so much elegance, that Mrs. Villiers was perfectly charmed with him ; and, as to Helena, she might have said to her dear, maternal, bosom-counsellor—“ That thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love !”—

After dinner, they drew round the fire. Frederick would sit between them,—help them to every thing,—do every thing ;—and gave himself up to that delicious flow of mind which a man of his character ever feels in the society of one or two females, who interest his heart, either with friendship or with love.

In the evening, he looked wistfully at Helena—then at the Piano Forte :—

“ May I sue for the treat of treats—

‘ My mother bids me bind my hair ? ’ ”

—She sang—more timidly, indeed, than usual, and in a soft, subdued tone ;—but with still more sweetness, and expression

than ever: Envy herself, indeed, could not deny that, whether in singing, or in speaking, she had a voice tuneful, and touching, beyond all example.—*Now*, when she was at the last strain, and sang those words—

“ The village seems asleep or dead,
When Lubin is away”—

she took so much care not to look at Frederick, that the very determination, called a blush of consciousness into her cheek.

Frederick's eyes “ anchor'd on” Helena.—Mr. Melcombe entered:—instinctively, he looked towards the singer, and the listener—

“ It is all over with them both!”—said he to himself;—and took his seat by Mrs. Villiers.

When Helena had finished, Frederick spoke not a word,—but remained hanging over the instrument, in deep meditation. Mr. Melcombe had for a few minutes been conversing in a low voice with Mrs. Vil-

liers ; then turning suddenly to her daughter,—

“ Now Helena, my dear girl,” said he, “ console me for what I endured seven years ago, from Miss Angle. I have never entirely got the better of it ; but you, perhaps, may recover me. If you love me, then, give me—

‘ Angels ever bright and fair.’ ”

She sang it immediately.—Frederick could have worshipped Mr. Melcombe for his proposal. He was more lost than ever—he began almost to apprehend that the angels *would* really come and carry her to Heaven—and ended by wondering what they could be about, that they did not.

“ Charming !”—said Mr. Melcombe. “ I will now forgive and forget, La Marquise de Sanspareil.”

The evening was concluded with a social supper ; and they deferred, till they could defer no longer, the cruel word Farewell.

CHAP. XXVII.

HELENA, when alone, had mused deeply on Frederick's story of Mary of Buttermere. In her leisure hours, she threw it into a poetical form, she had put the lines into her work-bag ; and one morning as she took it out in her mother's dressing-room in order to make a correction with her pencil, Mrs. Villiers observed her—and enquired,—

“ What have you there, Helena ?”

“ Why, Mamma, I am afraid I am like Audrey,—and that the Gods have not made me poetical :—I have been trying to versify the tale of Poor Mary of Buttermere,—but I am afraid it will not do.”—

“ Let me judge, my Love.”

“ But then you are *so* kind to every thing of mine!”—and she twined one snowy arm around her mother's neck, while she presented the paper.

“ You must observe, Mamma, that I have taken up the story a little before its very unpoetical termination ; I have supposed him only, as yet, in *danger* of some terrible punishment or other.”

The Beauty of Buttermere.

Where Buttermere's clear lake the land o'erspreads,
And its proud mountains rear their ancient heads,
There dwelt a simple maid, of beauteous frame,
And loveliest feature :—Mary was her name.
But oft the village youths would fondly swear,
She should be nam'd, The Beauty' of Buttermere.
Two aged parents claim'd her dutious cares ;
Their humble board her ready hand prepares.
For them the feather'd brood she daily feeds,
For them the simple garden clears from weeds.

But while she thus her easy labours plied,
Each rustic swain for lovely Mary sigh'd.
Secure she reign'd upon her rural throne,
And Beauty's soft dominion was her own.
Ill can the rival maids her triumphs bear,
Some thought her face was not so very fair.
What then ?—in Mary lives a latent grace,
That steals our hearts, e'en faster than her face.
Yet, though the youths their tender pain confess,
Not one a smile from Mary's lips had blest.
Was it, that as they sought her heart to move,
Pride fill'd the seat, and left no place for love ?

Ah no ! sweet Mary's heart was Pity's home :
 But—Mary's fated hour was not yet come,
 Yet soon—alas ! too soon,—drew on that hour,
 And o'er her head the clouds of sorrow lour.

One Summer noon, a cosset lamb she lost :
 To seek her truant o'er the mead she crost,
 Still pressing on she reach'd the winding shore,
 And sought, and call'd her fav'rite o'er and o'er—
 In vain !—for he still wander'd while she mourn'd,
 And not till evening to the cot return'd.

As Mary's eyes the grassy bank pursu'd,
 Beside the lake reclin'd, a youth she view'd ;
 And, as she look'd, she saw him graceful rise,
 And, where she stood, were bent his steps, his eyes.
 He came, he spoke, he flatter'd, he admir'd ;
 And was, or seem'd, with sudden love inspir'd.
 Still, as they walk'd, he watch'd her shape, and air,
 And softly whisper'd—“ Thou art wondrous fair.”
 Learn'd where she dwelt, and question'd of her
 state ;—

As she replied, they reach'd the cottage gate.
 Surpris'd, her mother scans the graceful guest ;—
 Surmises undefin'd, assail her breast,
 She court'sies low, and humbly asks his name—
 Her eyes enquir'd of *Mary* whence he came.
 The blushing maiden told her simple tale :
 The stranger gave a name,—his own to veil :
 A noble name, which he might proudly own,
 Though in those rude sequester'd scenes unknown.
 And now the Dame a doubtful welcome gives,
 And simple fare, which courteous he receives.

The good man soon his rustic labours o'er,
Returning slow, they see approach the door.
To him the maid her little tale repeats :—
The stranger thanks their kindness, and retreats.

But Mary, when alone, retir'd to rest,
The stranger's words revolv'd within her breast ;
His looks, his mien, his garb she ponder'd o'er :
All pleas'd beyond whate'er had pleas'd before.
Nor sleep, nor peace, poor Mary now could boast—
Yet—wish'd not for that peace so lately lost.
Now pleas'd, now pain'd, she now would smile, now
sigh ;—

Almost her temper chang'd—she knew not why.

At length, again the stranger came, and told
(Too late shall time the treacherous web unfold !—)
Of harsh relations, vain, and rich, and proud ;
Yet not the less his fervent passion vow'd ;
The Parents' favour sought, the daughter's heart—
And pray'd the holy priest his blessing might impart.

Something of man, and man's deceits they knew,
Yet could not think this stranger's tale untrue.
So bold his front, so honest was his face,
So fair his words, to doubt him were disgrace.
Poor Mary's gentle heart no fears molest,
Save of her humble powers to make him blest.

'T was done ! the day was fix'd, the knot was tied ;
Behold the simple maid a wretched bride !—
Most wretched !—for not many days were o'er,
Oh peaceful, happy days, to shine no more !—
When, all in haste, a courier sought their guest,
A scroll display'd,—and some brief words address'd.

Trembling, and pallid, and unnerv'd he stands ;
The wife, forecasting evil, wrings her hands.
Now, sees her husband into fury start,
While words of dreadful import pierc'd her heart.
“ Villain ! Impostor ! Slave ! ” the stranger cried ;
“ Depart with me, resign thy titled pride ;
The wealth, the honours, thou hast dar'd to claim,
And to it's master yield his noble name.”—

She hears no more !—but fainting, breathless falls ;
In shrieks her mother's voice for succour calls :
But she, forlorn one !—cold, and senseless lies,
And steals *one* hour from gathering miseries.
At length, her heavy eyes unclose with pain,
And seek her traitor husband's form in vain.
No comfort more to Mary's heart returns,
While for her parents, and herself, she mourns.
They, wretched pair ! in sorrow lose their days,
As on their Mary's wasting charms they gaze :
Their easy faith too late they now deplore ;
Their sun of peace is set, to rise no more !
Where, cold deceiver ! wand'rest thou unblest ?
While conscience feeds her fires within thy breast :
Nor shall remorse alone thy torment be,
Already Justice lifts her sword for thee !—
Think not—where'er it lurks—that wily head
Shall rest it's mischiefs on an easy bed,
While sunk in grief thy ruin'd victims lie,
No consolation left them, but—to die.

When Mrs. Villiers had read to the end—

“ I am inclined,” said she, “ to think much better of your performance, Helena, than you do yourself.”

“ I told you so, Mamina”—smiling sweetly in her face.—

Frederick here chanced to enter; and immediately enquired what had so deeply engaged their attention.

Helena hastily endeavoured to conceal the paper; but Mrs. Villiers having answered—

“ Only a poetical attempt of Helena’s”—he begged—entreated for a sight of it.—He was at length indulged;—and, to the great *amusement* of the author, pronounced it to be by far, the most exquisite tale in verse that had appeared since Parnell’s *Hermit*.—

CHAP. XXVIII.

Thus rolled on the days, in peace, in innocence, in friendship, and in love.

Frederick hourly grew more gay at one moment, more absent and contemplative the next. Every day did his solicitude increase, to reduce the morning walks, and rides, to a tête-à-tête. But it could not always be managed to his wish, nor would Helena herself always agree to the proposal.

Mrs. Villiers saw, and pondered, and perplexed herself. Mr. Melcombe did the same ; and they now, as very frequently before, unfolded their opinions, and apprehensions to each other. Mrs. Villiers trembled for the happiness of her daughter. Mr. Melcombe, though he had no information on the subject of Mr. Beaumont's views for the marriage of his son,

considered it was not improbable that they would be ambitious.

One day,—as they sat at table after dinner, Mr. Melcombe began thus :—

“ Frederick, I have a secret to tell you.”

“ My dear Sir, you both gratify and honour me; and as for your secret, my heart shall be its cabinet.”

“ I doubt it not in the least, Frederick :—my dear fellow,—you are in love.

“ Why, Frederick, if your horse were to start thus, I scarcely think that even *you* could keep your seat.”

Frederick looked guilty :—it was not that Mr. Melcombe had really told him any thing which he did not know—but he had flattered himself that he had not been read, quite so fluently.—Perhaps the reason why he dreaded Mr. Melcombe’s discovery of his secret, was the apprehension of that very expostulatory admonition which he saw was now coming ; — or, perhaps, he could not explain it himself. He was profoundly silent,—but, observing

that Mr. Melcombe was silent also, and seemed to be waiting for a reply,—

“ Dear Sir,” said he, at last, “ why should you think so?”

“ I could give you many reasons for my opinion—but you best can tell whether it is an erroneous one.”

“ That, Sir, I *cannot* aver”—Another pause—“ and possibly—if you take all things into consideration—you will not be very much surprised.”

“ Indeed I am not; and were I so happy as to be your father, I would give you to Helena Villiers, were I of all kingdoms king.”

“ That’s a stamp from the great seal of England, Sir!—Oh! take my joyful thanks for your sanction of my unchangeable sentiments:—surely, surely—your approbation will secure my father’s:—but, Sir, I as yet, know nothing of Helena’s mind.”

“ *Nothing*, Frederick?”

“ Nothing but—what I—dare to—*hope*—I have *said* nothing.”

" Nothing at all!"

Frederick looked more guilty than before.

" That is"—said Mr. Melcombe—" you have not asked her to marry you." Frederick bowed.

" Well!—I am not going to examine you on what you have said, my dear Frederick; but I must entreat that you will say *no more* until you have written to your father, and obtained his consent."

Frederick rose from his chair; and, looking full at Mr. Melcombe,—exclaimed, half reproachfully,—

" Do you recollect, Sir, that my father is in the East Indies?"

" I do."

" Frederick, it is for your sake—and still more for that of Helena that I speak. Would you wish that her soft and sensible heart should wind its every hope around your own, and then, let the mandate of a father tear away the silken threads, and burn them on the altar of ambition?—I do

not *know* that such would be the event ; but I very strongly suspect it,—and I must watch over Helena's happiness, not only on her own account, but on her *mother's*"—he tried to say—but his voice failed him.

" My dear Sir ! what can I do ?—see her day by day ?—listen to her sentiments —her words—her tones—and while I am fascinated by her soft vivacity, her kind humanity, and feel that the pulse of her soul beats time to mine—be cool, considerate, reserved,—and hypocritical ?—No, no, no—forbid it nature, forbid it love !—Alas, Sir ! too well do I know my own weakness—I must speak, or fly !" —and he walked about the room in violent perturbation.—Then broke out again—

" O God ! if this were to be, that you talk of—if her angel heart were indeed to be mine—O that it were !—could I but be sure of that !—O Helena, Helena !—Fate ! give me but Helena, and let my father's riches go wherever they will be most valued,

or enjoyed.—Something I was going to say—but I have lost it.”

“ *Dear Frederick*, endeavour to compose yourself!—You said if this were to happen that I talk of, if her heart were to be yours.”

“ Aye, and if I knew that my father’s prohibition were to come at last—why then—before I would invade *her* happiness, I would this instant fly to the farther end of this world away from her.”—

“ And what should I do there?” added he mournfully;—“ But—after all, Sir, should my father be so unreasonable, so cruel, may I not say?—as to refuse me *such* a woman, would he not set me free from my obedience?”

“ No—no—Frederick—the law will free you in a few months, but do not even *look* that way. *Helena*, I am confident, would never listen to such a thought.—Moreover—you have been educated without a profession, in expectation of your father’s fortune; and he has suffered a longer banishment from his own country, than he would

otherwise have chosen,—doubtless on *your* sole account.—No, Frederick—it does not bear a second reflection:—dismiss it instantly:—write to your father—if you please, *to-morrow*—but wait the event, I entreat you, before you speak more decisively than you have already done.”

“ I am convinced, Sir;—and besides, I would not—Heaven knows I would not—willingly disappoint my father’s wishes. It is my duty, and, I trust, would, hereafter, be my delight, to make him happy—you know, well know, how much I owe him; and yet—and yet—O Sir, I *cannot* speak to Helena, when we are alone, in any language which does not say—‘ I love ‘ you’—nay *you* read my heart when I thought it was out of sight.—I will consider to-morrow what I can hope to do:—to-night I feel that I can consider nothing, and I dare not promise any thing for to-morrow. All I know is, that I will write to my father immediately—and, will not you, my dear Sir, write to him also?”

" That, Frederick, I will, with all the powers I have."

" God reward and bless you, Sir!—then will I not despair."

CHAP. XXIX.

FREDERICK lay awake longer, by many hours, than he had done for twenty years—or, in other words, in all his life before. It was in vain that he strove to reason himself into the necessity of awaiting his father's consent. Mr. Melcombe had, indeed, convinced him that it was his duty to wait for it, before he married ;—but, to command every word, every look, every gesture, he well knew surpassed his power :—yet, as Mr. Melcombe had decreed that it must be done, he would resolutely make the effort. Accordingly with his whole soul wound up to one purpose, he arose, and addressed his father. His letter was respectful, grateful, soliciting ; but, on this

one point, decisive—that the world contained no system of happiness for him, but marriage with Helena Villiers. He painted all her attractions—gave unbounded scope to his rhetoric in describing the perfections of her mind, her conduct, her person,—her manners ;—and referred him to Mr. Melcombe for a confirmation of his report.

Mr. Melcombe wrote, without rapture, the same opinions ;—stated, openly, and exactly, her disproportionate share of worldly possessions ; — but added, that she was, in herself, a gem of the highest value ; and that, in his estimation, Frederick, and Frederick alone,—of whom he wrote in the most exalted language of praise,—was worthy to win, and wear her. —He ended, by joining his warmest entreaties to those of his “beloved young Friend,” for Mr. Beaumont’s consent that his son should solicit the hand of Miss Villiers, confessing that he “wished it the more earnestly, because he was perfectly

satisfied that the hearts of both were absolutely, and for ever, one."

Frederick felt a mountain of difficulty removed, when these important letters were written. With the impetuosity of conclusion natural to his age, character, and present sentiments, he leaped from what he trusted would be the cause, to the desired consequence; and would not now listen to a doubt of infallible success.

" O my best friend!" said he to Mr. Melcombe, " how can I ever duly acknowledge this kind effort for my happiness?—What would a life of devotion to your service avail towards repaying one fraction of my debt to you, if to your pleadings I should owe the blessing I sigh for?—Why, ah! why are you not *indeed* my father?"

" My dearest Frederick, I must be content—nay *proud*,—that you love me like a son : from this moment, let me have all your confidence."

" Heaven knows, you shall, Sir ;—my heart is already lightened by the communications we have exchanged :—dearest and

most honoured of my friends—live for ever in my soul—second only to Helena Villiers!"

The letters were dispatched, with every possible provision for their safe conveyance by the first ships.—And now, behold Frederick appearing in his new character, of a reserved, and cautious lover.

"I must begin, Sir," said he, "when we are all together—I shall make nothing of it in a tête-à-tête."

Accordingly, one afternoon, within a short time after this conversation had passed, they went to Mrs. Villiers's together.

Mr. Melcombe, as he entered, asked Mrs. Villiers, with his eye, still more expressively than with his voice, whether they might spend the evening with her.

"To be sure you may.—Take your seats;—and, to improve your welcome, we will regale on some of that super-excellent coffee that Frederick begged for us, the other day, of his friend the Turk.—Come, dear Frederick, 'wheel the sofa 'round,' and let us be quite comfortable."

Poor Frederick rejoiced to be employed, in the hope that he might escape observation ; but, in his zeal, and confusion, contrived to make a rent in Helena's gown.

" Awkward thing !"—cried she—" see what you have done !"

" I beg your pardon, Helena,"—in a tone, which, that it might not be pathetic, he found it was absolutely necessary should be grave and cold.

" You are mighty solemn to-night"—thought she—Mr. Melcombe called forth all his eloquence to amuse the ladies, and draw their attention from the embarrassed Frederick. Mrs. Villiers was particularly cheerful ; but whenever *they* ceased speaking, the conversation flagged, and restraint and uneasiness insensibly crept over the late happy party. Frederick *attempted* to converse ;—he sometimes even ventured to address himself to Helena ;—alluded to their books,—especially the *historical* ones ;—enquired after Mrs. Lewis,—and wondered whether her daughter would ever marry."

With such interesting discourse, without ever once looking at Helena, Frederick flattered himself he was performing his part to admiration. Mrs. Villiers, however, thinking that he was either very dull, or very much out of spirits, desired Helena to play—"and," said she—"let it be something to enliven us."

Helena obeyed—Frederick thought it was not in the bond that he should approach the Piano-Forte—he sat still;—and it happened that he even turned his back upon it.

The musick-book accidentally opened at a difficult piece;—Helena, neither knowing, nor caring, what she played, began—but performed intolerably ill;—her time was false;—and notes,—fingers,—heart, all were out of tune.

"I wish *you* would play, Mamma"—said she. Mrs. Villiers complied. Mr. Melcombe stood, looking over her. Helena insisted on turning over the leaves; and poor Frederick sat, alone and immoveable, contemplating the fire.

"And this is to go on for a whole year!"—said he to himself, counting on his fingers how many months the fleet would occupy in sailing to India and back again—"I had rather work in the coal-mines."

They got through the evening as well as they could;—and, for the first time, were all relieved when it was at an end.

"My dear Sir! what is to become of me?" said Frederick, linking his arm within Mr. Melcombe's, as they walked home.

"Why, my dear boy, you have a little over-done it,—as I feared you would. I did not advise that you should never look at Helena—nor ever say one word that she could possibly wish to hear,—nor preserve towards her a countenance like Dr. Pomfret's."

Frederick felt a slight disposition to laugh. He was, however, too much disconcerted to indulge it, and only said—

"But how is it possible to go half the way?—It requires ten thousand times more hypocrisy than the whole."

He went to bed immediately ; and lay awake still longer than before.

Helena, in the mean time, sat meditating awhile, how to escape from her mother, without saying any thing of what passed in her mind. Thus far, she had been perfectly open with this indulgent parent ; but now, that Frederick was so visibly changed towards her, she felt an immediate disposition to reserve. Joined with much humility, Helena possessed some pride :—a paradox, which will best be understood by making constant observations on her general conduct. For the present, it may suffice to say, that her pride seldom displayed itself except in what concerned the lordly creature Man, and, at this particular juncture, she would not confess, even to her mother, that Frederick's deportment hurt, offended, or even interested her.—Rather than do this, she—I am sorry for it—but—she pretended a head-ache, and went up stairs. In three minutes afterwards, a loud bell made Marian start up from her “ story-book,”

which she was eagerly reading by the kitchen fire.

"That's Miss Villiers's bell," said she, "and I am sure something must be the matter,—it rings so loud;"—and away she ran to answer it.

"Marian, here's not one thing ready for me:—the fire does not burn—and it is all wrong." Poor Helena!—this was just the case.

"I beg your pardon, Ma'am; but I did not know you were coming up so early:—it is not near your usual time."

"But you need not have left every thing to the last minute."

"I am very sorry I did, Ma'am,—I am sure—I—I never will again"—said Marian, sobbing.

Helena looked at her with confusion,—and instantly came to herself. In one moment the helpless faithful Marian,—now shivering in rags, the child of her charity;—now rushing into a midnight storm—in the service of her mother, stood at once

before her, and overwhelmed her with shame, pity, and remorse.

“ Nay, do not cry, my dear Marian :— I did not mean to be angry with you : something had cruelly vexed me ; but I am very sorry that I spoke so sharply to *you*.”

Marian, thus consoled, now wept with tenderness—much wondering in her heart how it was possible that any body, or any thing, could be suffered to vex such an angel of a lady,—and begging that she might be allowed to bring her own bed, and lie on the floor in her mistress’s apartment, lest she should be unable to sleep, and might find relief from restlessness by talking to her in the night. Never was any thing better designed, or,—more impossible to be accepted.

“ No, I thank you, Marian ;—go to bed : I shall sleep very well, I dare say.”

It was a bold conclusion, and rested on a weak foundation.

When Marian was gone, Helena gave vent to the first painful tears that a word,

or look, of Frederick's had ever caused her, and that idea, combining with all the rest, effectually banished slumber from her eyes.

CHAP. XXX.

HELENA conversed with assumed cheerfulness at breakfast, to conceal her cares ; —then, observing that it was “ a very fine frosty morning,” said she should “ like to take a walk.”

She put on the white hat, and black pelisse, as it were instinctively ; for Frederick had admired them ; and began to “ pace the garden’s round” with that restless rapidity which hopes to fly from thought. “ But he may call,” she reflected—“ and I will *not* see him ;”—and she passed through the garden gate into the meadow, and from thence to the road. She wandered

on, till the wood in which Frederick had saved her from the gipsies, struck her eyes. She paused,—she opened the gate which divided it from the lane,—and advanced a few steps within it. The trees, though leafless, were beautiful. A heavy fog, on the preceding day, had fallen on the branches ; and, in the course of the night, it had been congealed by a white frost. The sun darted his beams through the wood, and to Helena it appeared a grove of diamonds.

“ It was here,” said she internally, “ that he saved me from being torn away from my mother, and from *himself*. Then *indeed* he loved me.—And why,” she added, in a low and plaintive voice—“ why, alas ! does he not love me still ?”—

Fredcreek had *not* called on Helena ;—but as soon as he could leave Mr. Melcombe, had rambled abroad also.—His feet bore him, insensibly, towards the very wood whither Helena had gone to avoid him. As he was passing the gate, her last words sank upon his heart. He stopped

as spell-bound.—“ It is the voice of Helena,”—said he—and sprang over the gate:—in a moment he was at her side, and all else that the world contained, was forgotten.

“ Helena here!—and alone, my Beloved!—but there are tears in those sweet eyes.”

She brushed them away—saying, haughtily—“ No—it is the north wind that affects them.”

“ Helena,” said Frederick, regarding her with the most mournful expression—“ you are displeased with me.” She looked not displeased only, but distressed—and was silent.

“ O Helena!—you know not what I endured, during the whole of yesterday evening—I wonder not that you are offended:—what could you have been thinking of me?”

“ What, indeed!”—thought she.

“ Yet, had you known but the half of what passed on the preceding night, between Mr. Melcombe and me——”

“ Mr. Melcombe, Frederick!—he urge

you to—to—no, Frederick!"—and she could no longer restrain her tears.

" This is too much," said he :—" never, never will I bear this. Away all false pretences!—all hateful disguises towards her who is alone the cause, the object, the hope, the spring of every feeling of my soul, of every thought, word, and action of my existence. Helena! ever dear—ever precious to my heart, from childhood to this present agonizing moment,—now absolute mistress of my destiny!—while I dared attempt to suppress my real feelings, and wear a countenance of coldness, and reserve, I loved you more than the breath of life, or the light of Heaven."

He was violently agitated, and leaned against a tree for support. The countenance of Helena, in which a moment before, he had beheld the ill-supported struggle of tenderness and indignation, yielded now to every soft impression, and the sun of joy, and pardon, shone in her front.

She gave him the hand for which he was waiting with anxious submission; and,

while the soft-distilling dews descended on the roses of her cheeks, she softly said—

“ Frederick, I believe and forgive you—and now, I await your explanation.”

“ A thousand, thousand blessings on this generous confidence.”—Then, drawing her arm within his own—“ Let us walk onward,” said he, in a tone of ineffable tenderness, “ into the wood; while, unseen, and undisturbed, I tell you all that I have undergone within the last two miserable days.” He then repeated, with various anxious comments, every word that had fallen in the late conversation between Mr. Melcombe and himself—

“ —all which to hear
Did Desdemona seriously incline.”

“ And now, Helena,”—he continued,—“ since the fond impatience of this beating heart,” and, as he pressed her hand to it, she plainly felt its fluttering throbs,—“ is doomed to wait, a long and tedious year, for the last confirmation of all its wishes,—tell me, my first, my last, my only love—what hope have I in the answering sym-

pathy of that heart, from which alone my earthly happiness can spring—speak, my Beloved—and give me—*sic, or datt.*"

After a long pause, and numerous efforts to gain breath to speak,—while the name of Frederick leaped out to catch from the down-cast eye, and blushing cheek, the hoped-for answer—at last—she said—

"Why—why should I thus shrink from the confession, that the heart, whose preference is my pride, *does* not, *cannot*—live in vain?"—Again she paused—overcome by every tender, and every delicate feeling of the soul.

"O sweet, O precious acknowledgement!"—cried Frederick—"sacred be the month, the day, the hour, and the spot which have combined to bless me."

"The *spot*," resumed Helena—"is precisely that in which you rescued me from the wretches who would have carried me away. From childhood, almost beyond my memory, I loved you, Frederick, affectionately—but, at that moment, gratitude fastened a new tie upon my heart, and

perhaps the interest arising from the exertion of your youthful courage for my deliverance, fixed me faster in yours." She ended—

—and in his ear
So charming left her voice, that he awhile
Thought her still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear—
Then, as new-wak'd, thus gratefully replied"—

" Helena!—take my heart from my bosom, and read its ardent thanks for this dear confession—speak them I cannot!—And now, how can I fear—how can I think of—father—prudence—or wisdom?"

" Yes,—yes—in due time, you must think of them all"—said she, with a heavenly smile—" but not to-day:—for one day, at least, we will release each other from the cruel task of anticipating disappointments—but then, Frederick—there is my mother to be consulted, still."

" O bless her! dear soul!—you would not have me doubt of *her* concurrence, if I should obtain that of my father!—I would not be vain, Helena, but sure I am, that your sweet mother regards me most

kindly—and Heaven knows I love her as if she were mine already—you will, at least; believe that I wish she were so, my Helena!" And Frederick too began to smile, and felt ten thousand times repaid for past anxieties.

• Helena loved,—and in that thought were buried all doubts, fears, possibilities, of human calamity. What kind expressions, what tender assurances, were exchanged in the succeeding hours of unclouded felicity! The walk was prolonged 'till Helena could scarcely walk at all; which Frederick, at last, perceiving, began to overwhelm himself with reproaches for not remembering that she was not altogether so robust as himself.

They then turned their steps towards home; but, as it would be a pity to interrupt them, we will leave them a little longer to their heart-engaging converse,—and go and see what has been passing in the mean time, between Mrs. Villiers and Mr. Melcombe.

Confidence and esteem, between these amiable friends, were equal; though the

more tender sentiment (chastened, but never subdued) lived only in the heart of Mr. Melcombe. Soon after he had missed Frederick, he repaired to Mrs. Villiers, and, finding her alone, unveiled to her the whole mystery of Frederick's deportment on the preceding evening. She was, as may well be imagined, deeply interested—not extremely surprised;—nor was she so highly elated with the hope of such an establishment for her daughter, as many a *prudent* mother, so situated, would have been.

“ Frederick is a noble creature, my dear friend,” said she, “ and I have no great doubt of his having wound himself pretty closely round Helena’s heart;—but—but—you know him better than I do—are you sure he is as much formed for Helena, as you flatter my child by thinking that she is for him?—Has he—that *very* domestic turn of mind which I know to be essential to her felicity? I have observed too, in trifling instances,—you will, I’m sure, excuse my frankness—a certain degree of

quickness, sometimes approaching even to vehemence, in his temper."

" My dearest friend"—answered Mr. Melcombe—" you have not spoken a single word that does not reflect the highest honour, both on your maternal solicitude, and on that exalted liberality of mind, which no worldly considerations can influence for a moment. But, I trust, I shall satisfy you that your fears are groundless. The greatest error into which Frederick has ever fallen, was committed, as you may remember, while he was but nineteen years of age ;—and, believe me, so deeply was he penetrated by the representations I then made to him, that he has never since hazarded any sum of money, of which the loss would have been felt. The heart of Frederick has been one of my favourite speculations, for many years ; and I can further declare, that the quickness you have occasionally observed in his temper is nothing more than the almost invariable concomitant of warmth of heart, and acuteness of feeling. As to his domestic in-

cinations, I believe that had he been a Pagan, his most profound devotions would have been paid to the Household Gods.—He has an ever active attention to the happiness, and accommodation of every creature that is near him,—and to speak his negative praise—it is not sufficient to say, that he is free from selfishness ; for he has a studious exclusion of *self* in every plan and action, of his life ; and an exemption from envy, even to an ignorance of its very nature and source :—so that praise of the high qualities of others is not only an easy, but a delightful exercise of his eloquence.

“ —then he has a hand
Open as day to melting charity.”

Mrs. Villiers mused for a few moments in silent pleasure, and then broke out—

“ After my death, I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions—
Than such an honest chronicler as thou art.”

“ And now, my friend, having no appeal to make from your decree on this momentous point, I must confess my own

sins.—I am—I certainly am, Sir, a little proud, respecting my daughter; —and; should any portion of your apprehensions concerning Mr. Beaumont's answer, be realized, you must allow me to say, that my consent will be withheld. The family that receives my Helena must not suffer, but solicit, her acceptance of its name."

" And against that decree, my dearest Madam, I will make no appeal."

Here the door was suddenly opened; and Frederick followed Helena into the room. Both, involuntarily, started. Frederick knew that he had sacrificed, not his promise, for he had made none, but Mr. Melcombe's decided wishes. Helena, too, had her confessions to make, though not at that moment;—and all that was now passing in their minds, and had recently passed in their conversation, was revealed in their ingenuous faces. Mrs. Villiers took her daughter in her arms.

" I know all, my love,"—

Helena dropped her head on the shoulder of her mother.

"But *you* do not know *all*, Sir;" said Frederick, emphatically.

"Yes, my dear Frederick, I do;—I see it all, and I forgive you; and O that your father may concur in promoting your happiness, as joyfully as I would do!"—And, so saying, he wrung his hand with a heart full of friendship, and sympathy. Frederick, then turning to the mother and the daughter, who were weeping together, bent one knee before Mrs. Villiers, and looking up to her with glistening, and supplicating eyes, passionately exclaimed—

"Will not *you* give her to me?"

Mrs. Villiers took the hand of her daughter, and placed it in his;—only saying,— "Conditionally, Frederick."—He kissed, by turns, the two beloved hands that had blessed him;—then rose,—and taking Helena in his arms, in trembling ecstasy,

"You are mine, Helena;—by your mother's dear consent, at least;—and O let me at *this* moment, persuade myself, that I may answer for my father's, also."

Mr. Melcombe, with an expressive look

to Mrs. Villiers, fervently pronounced—
“ God bless them !”—and hurried away,
from the scene.

Frederick remained some time longer ;
and many kind and affectionate assurances
passed between Mrs. Villiers and himself.
At length, faithfully promising that his
whole life should thank, though nothing
could pay her, for the gift she had bestowed,
he declared that he had received as much
happiness as he could bear that day, and,
leaving his last fond looks in the eyes of
Helena, he followed Mr. Melcombe home.

CHAP. XXXI.

ON the next morning, after a hasty breakfast, the happy Frederick flew to Helena. He was shewn into the parlour, and was not long kept in expectation.

"O Helena! hardly can I believe that what passed yesterday was not a dream:—but you have been weeping again, my own love!"

"I have been with my mother:—you may easily imagine that we have had many-tender things to say to each other since yesterday morning, Frederick!"

"I know you are a dear little affectionate angel:—but Mamma and you are not going to part, Helena."

"No—not now;—but if—if—"

"If what? my hesitating love:—if—if you make me the happiest of mortal men, you will not part, believe me, if I can possibly prevent it."

"No?—then, Frederick, do you *indeed* love me."

"What then, you doubted it, wicked one, did you?"—and he shook his head at her—then pressed her hand to his heart, and his lips—then—

"To be quite serious, Helena: know you not how affectionately I love your mother?—and even though I loved her less—certain as I am that her society is essential to your happiness—would I not say, as I do now, let us live all together, and live wherever my Helena wishes?—Only be thou mine, and all places alike will be Paradise to me.—How cruel is it that I must go again to Oxford! and leave my kingdom of felicity, just as I am elected, and waiting only to be crowned."

"Patience, Frederick!—remember that your father is to be *Archbishop*, and he is—in the East Indies."

"I know it—O too well I know it!—but, talk not, my sweet Helena, of the East Indies!"

"Well, but hear me;—you have my
o 6

mother's permission to come this evening, as well as, if he pleases, Mr. Melcombe: and observe, you have my free consent to be a little more agreeable than you thought proper to be the night before last."

" Why, I must confess, I was not the life and spirit of the company—but *that*, you know, was entirely owing to you and Mr. Melcombe."

Evening came:—Frederick was all soul, and life, and happiness.

" Can this be the same Frederick," said Mr. Melcombe, " whom we had among us two evenings ago? Upon that occasion, he reminded one of the Irish Baronets—who insisted that he was a fine boy, and they *changed* him!"

The lovers looked very conscious—and Mrs. Villiers smilingly whispered Helena to the Piano-Forte, desiring her to play a little better than she had done on that same evening.

Helena replied in the same tone, " And then, perhaps, Frederick will not sit with his back to me all the time."

She played much better ;—yet less correctly than usual, after all. She sang, too, and, in Frederick's opinion, not the less sweetly, because tremulously. He softly assisted with a second.

“ Why, I did not know, before, that you could sing, Frederick.”

“ And I am sure you do not know it now, Helena ; but I should mightily like to try the experiment with you—cannot you teach me ?”

“ What shall I teach you ?—‘ Blow high, blow low !’ or, ‘ O ruddier than the cherry.’ ”

“ Why no : I cannot think you would make a very good sailor, or a much better Polypheme.”

“ But,” lowering his voice—“ you can certainly teach me

‘ Love in her eye sits playing,
‘ And sheds delicious death.’ ”

“ Be quiet, Sir !”

This happy evening, and a few others not less so, flew along like fleeting dreams of delight ; and again arrived the mourn-

ful eve of Frederick's departure for Oxford. He was heavily lamenting his fate, when Mrs. Villiers was presented with a letter. It was from her friend of former years, once Miss Amyand—now Mrs. Morley. After a long absence from her native land, she had lately returned with her husband, and was at this time in London. The correspondence had never been entirely dropped, and Mrs. Morley now wrote to invite Mrs. Villiers and her daughter to pay her a visit in the spring. Mrs. Villiers would greatly have preferred the enjoyment of her friend's company in her own retirement :—she had no desire whatever to see London again ;—but as she thought it very proper that her daughter should see it, she pondered on the proposal.

Frederick thought that it would be particularly proper, if it should happen immediately after the Easter vacation ; as he could then escort them to the Metropolis ; and should also be within a few hours of them when obliged to return to Oxford.—

" Let it be so, dear Mrs. Villiers!" said he.

" I will consider of it, Frederick, and acquaint you with my determination, before you leave us; let that pacify you for the present."

Mrs. Villiers did consider,—and did decide that it would be a very suitable time for her visit, and thus it was arranged that it should be: Frederick gratefully declared that she had lightened the intermediate separation of half its burden.

CHAP. XXXII.

It was but a few days after Frederick's departure that the following letter from him was presented to Helena.

" What a crowd of thoughts, and emotions, fill my heart, my adored Helena, on taking my pen, for the first time, by your

sweet permission, since I have *fully* confessed my love.

“ Separated as I am from you, and comparatively comfortless as I feel myself in that separation, I am, yet, happier, far happier than I was, but a few weeks ago,—when, though near you, I lived in doubt and dread of what was passing in your mind; when, although,—may I confess it, Helena? my fears were not uncheered by hopes—yet fears they *were*. Imagine, then, the transition of which my heart was sensible, when, after that wretched evening of constraint, and reserve, our agitated feelings mutually revealed the truth:—when you, ingenuous, angelic being!—in reply to the fond overflowings of my soul, sweetly acknowledged that your heart was—all my own.—

“ From that moment, I have seen a new creation rising around me—nothing wears the same face,—the works of Nature, the works of man, and man himself, have acquired in my estimation, a new and dearer interest. I am in so placid a disposition

towards my fellow-creatures, that I sometimes fancy myself growing particularly amiable, and beneficent;—and then—I smile at my own self-complacency, and whisper to myself—

‘ And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
‘ The object, and the pleasure of mine eye
‘ Is only Helena.’ —

“ It is Helena that inspires me: it is Helena who has taught me the value of existence—It is she who swells my veins with rapture, and bids me glow with benevolence, and melt with love.

“ From the sickening possibility of any obstacle arising from my father, I shrink with such a weakness of timidity as that with which children run from solitude, and darkness. No—I dare not encounter the very idea.—Sooner, far sooner would I ‘ meet the Lion in his wrath.’ It is little to say that I will study your wishes, my Helena, and promote your happiness—for I shall have no wishes, no happiness, but what will so entirely centre in yourself,

that whatever concerns, interests, approaches you, will instinctively become a vital part in the system of my felicity.

" Have you been well, cheerful, amused, since I left you ? Does this London journey fill your lively imagination with pictures of novelty, and pleasure ? and may I—yes—my own heart assures that I may presume—to hope that there is a little lurking wish to view those untried scenes in the company of one who enjoys nothing effectually without you ? Tell your incomparable mother, and tell Mr. Melcombe too, that I love them better than ever.—And tell me—O tell me soon, my only Love, that you remember me, think of me, and that you will not be sorry, sweet Helena, when my age of banishment shall be once again expired.—

" I have been boasting that I feel most amiably complacent towards my fellow-creatures : yet am I very often extremely anxious to escape from them all ; and in this busy, idle, place it is very difficult to accomplish it.. Parties, invitations, civili-

ties kindly distressing—often urge me on society, while I am sighing for a moonlight walk by myself, that I may converse with you :—and at times, in defiance of all solicitation, I accomplish this, and wander many a mile—

‘ To woo lone Quiet in her dusky groves.’—

“ But if I go on writing for ever, how am I to get an answer?—in pure selfishness, then, sweet Helena, I am preparing, you see, to bid you, farewell. But I still linger and long to write more.—Even in writing an adieu, I feel that

—“ Parting is such sweet sorrow,
‘ That I shall say good night, ‘till it be morrow.’

“ Lovely, and beloved, now *indeed*
Adieu.—

“ Ever most devotedly yours,

“ F. B.”

Letter to FREDERICK BEAUMONT.

“ The surest way by which I can satisfy you that I *do* remember you, Frederick, is

to comply with the request which you have taken great care I shall not forget—and—answer your letter.—I could make you a little vain by telling you how much I value it,—but it would be a pity to spoil you, and so I say nothing. Yet—I will not deny that it pleased me, and that I feel pride, as well as pleasure, in the possession of a regard so perfect from a mind so exalted.

“ Yours, Frederick, is not a common love; and I will hope that if the possible objections to which you so tenderly and fearfully allude, should not be thrown in our way, I may be found not insensible to the affectionate kindness with which you already anticipate the study of *my* happiness—or slow to contribute *my* powers in forming and perpetuating *yours*.

“ Your considerate proposal respecting my dear mother forms an everlasting claim on my acknowledgment. When I talk to her of it, the dear Soul looks thoughtful—shakes her head—says—‘ it was very like ‘ Frederick to think of it, but—perhaps it is better not:—and yet, Helena, to lose

'thee!—and then I stop her mouth with a kiss—and so end our arguments.

"I rode yesterday with Mr. Melcombe, and he made me laugh by telling me, how he had *threatened* to accompany us the first day we rode out together in the winter, and how much pains you took to invite him — to be of our party, which he had, in reality no sort of intention to join. He talked much of you, Frederick—not only with the warmth of a friend, but with the tenderness of a father, and was eloquent in your praise.

"You ask how I like the thoughts of the London journey.—Why upon the whole, very well. You beg hard to be flattered; but I have told you that I will not indulge you:—therefore with respect to the pleasure of seeing the *New World* in company with a certain, saucy, old play-fellow—I shall leave you *entirely* to your own conjectures:—and lest you should be impatient to pursue them, I will not interrupt you any longer;—but with Mamma's love, leave you to ruminant,

. —if you please, on her—who is—very
truly, Yours,

“ H. V.”

How often Frederick kissed this letter, and blessed the hand that wrote it, and how he answered it, and how he got it by heart—may easily be imagined by all readers, who have lately written, or received, their first love-letters ; or even,—who *remember* having done so ;—and those who have done neither, will probably not wish for any further particulars :—it may, therefore, be sufficient to say that this letter lasted Frederick to live upon 'till he received another in the same propitious strain ;—and that, at last, notwithstanding all the raptures that letters could give, he saw with transport the day arrive on which he was to suspend the correspondence,—and set out once more for Monmouthshire. He had not absolutely fixed his time with Mr. Melcombe ; for though he knew precisely on what day he should begin his journey, he was not so certain at

what hour he should be enabled, by bribing postillions, &c. &c. to bring it to an end.

The event was that he arrived, on a beautiful spring evening, some hours before he was in any degree expected. Mr. Melcombe being from home, he flew to Mrs. Villiers's.—

Helena was alone.

" She turn'd—she redder'd like a rose."—

" O Helena ! am I here at last!"—So much was felt, that little, for a long time, was said, on either side : and when they could speak, a world of pretty things were yet unsaid,—when Mr. Melcombe, who, on his return, had heard of his young friend's arrival, and had given him, as he thought, a very reasonable allowance of rapture,—entered the room followed soon after by Mrs. Villiers.

The meeting was indescribably affectionate on all sides, and the evening flew by in the most animated and interesting conversation.

The next morning Frederick and Helena walked out alone.

They wandered toward their favourite wood: during their walk the incessant strokes of a woodman's axe struck on their ears—

"I am dreadfully afraid they are cutting down trees in that wood," said Frederick.—

"I have been afraid of it some time," answered Helena—"I could almost wish that trees were of no use—it is such a calamity to lose the beauty of them."—

They reached the wood—began to ascend the hill—and beheld a noble oak, which they were now going to visit for the hundredth time, and which, while it stood, they had been accustomed to call "The King of the forest,"—now prostrate on the earth.

During the remainder of their walk, their thoughts were almost unceasingly taken up in lamenting his untimely fate; and Frederick, as soon as he found himself alone, thus mourned and moralized, in numbers.—

The falling Oak.

Grim Winter, with an envious frown,
Throws his tyrant-sceptre down;
While Spring assumes th' alternate away,
And, smiling, bids the world be gay.

The winds repose behind the hill;
And rains no longer swell the rill:
A soothing stillness charms the air—
But hark!—what sudden sound is there?—
Sure, 't was the Woodman's ruffian stroke—
Too sure!—and see! my honour'd Oak
Trembles at the deadly wounds,
Whence the frequent axe rebounds.

On his proud height, what storms he stood!—
The boast, the wonder of the wood.
Yet,—while his hundred arms are spread,
As they would guard his awful head,
Staggering, the mighty Monarch bends,
And, dying, from his throne descends:
To earth, in thunder, down he falls,
And Echo from the mountain calls.

Thus—shall the Muse of Hist'ry tell—
Polluted France! *thy* Sov'reign fell.
'Twas in the pride of manhood's pow'r—
It was in glory's noon-tide hour,—
Then, when his Nobles round his Throne
Shone with a lustre like his own,—

That Louis heard the fateful blast,
From Treason's horrid trumpet cast ;—
And soon the sacrilegious blow
Laid th' anointed Monarch low.—

Scarce can he look a last farewell
On that base land he loves *too well*,
Ere the long sleep shall close his eyes—
And see !—he bends—he bleeds—he dies

END OF VOL. I.

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